





**REAL LIFE PROBLEMS  
AND THEIR  
SOLUTION**

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*Older children will develop a sense of responsibility by looking after younger brothers and sisters when the parents are out, but this should never be made a duty or a burden, and children should be shown that their services are appreciated.*

# REAL LIFE PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTION

BY  
R. EDYNBRY



ODHAMS PRESS LIMITED  
LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2



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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HAT cynical old philosopher Hobbes remarked many years ago that man's life was "nasty, brutish and short." It was, he said, the only conclusion he could draw from a long experience of his fellow men. The remark is an exaggeration—but it is no further from the truth than the genial lie that life is a bed of roses.

How many of us can place our hands on our hearts and say in honesty that our lives have been complete successes? Very few.

It is not so much the great crises and tragedies that mar our happiness and our contentment : it is rather the breakdown in the harmony of our day to day existence, something wrong with the daily round, that most seriously interferes with the joy in living which should be our birthright.

Great tragedies and crises, if only because of their urgency and drama, call forth our reserves. We meet them—often half-way. It is not the great splashes of water that wear away stones, but the steady falling of the smallest drops. So it is with us : our resistances are broken by the relentless pressure of everyday frictions.

How to discover them, understand them, overcome them is the secret of the art of happy living.

Life is not simple : there are no golden rules to learn as children that we can apply throughout our whole existences. Life is complex, full of surprises, always varied. And while this variety makes nonsense of the most carefully planned regimes, while, more than anything else, it prevents us from so settling our existences that nothing untoward shall disturb us, yet it is, in truth, the spice of life and without it the world would die of boredom.

Let us remember that without trials there would be no triumphs; without dangers there would be no victories. Therefore we should face life squarely, conscious of its problems, frightened of them not at all.

Courage must be our watchword. Yet courage alone can teach us nothing, something more is needed—insight.

*Real Life Problems and Their Solution* had its origin in this need of men and women to recognize and to master their problems.

It is designed to furnish insight and understanding and here is its justification.

A word on the arrangement of the book. The various sections speak for themselves. Each one has been planned as far as possible as a self-contained unit; but a life is a continuous, emerging whole and can be understood and interpreted only as a whole. No clear-cut division is thus either possible or desirable.

It is my hope, therefore, that this book will be read as a whole; but if it is fully to serve the purpose for which it was designed, that is, of providing an easily accessible and rapidly consulted guide, philosopher and friend—it must be made to yield its counsel with the utmost simplicity.

For that reason the index is both long and detailed and every effort has been made to provide adequate cross-references. By using it, therefore, it should be possible to find whatever entry you want under two, three, or even more key words. The discussion on the problem of birth control, for example, is indexed under the entries on Marriage, Contraception, Sex and Birth Control.

Experience is, in truth, the world's finest teacher, though a cruel and brutal one at times. Yet we can all learn from the experiences of others. In that belief I have divided each chapter into two parts: the first may be called a general discussion of the subjects with which that chapter deals, the second is a series of real questions and answers related to specific problems that are none the less typical of those in the subject under discussion.

In this way it has proved possible to cover very much more ground and it is believed that the book's practical utility has been thereby greatly enhanced.

It remains only for me to express the hope that this volume will serve the purpose for which it was designed—of being a practical help to all whose lives are threatened by "life's sick hurry and divided aims." Courage, sympathy and understanding are our greatest weapons in life's battles. Without them we shall fail. Armed with them we may still be defeated, but we can take pride in our efforts. Let us always remember that great philosophy of life given us by Joseph Addison:—

"'Tis not in mortals to command success,

But we'll do more, Sempronius—we'll deserve it."

R. EDYNBRY.

# SECTION I

## CHILDHOOD

### CHAPTER 1.—THE CHILD IN THE HOME

#### TODAY IS THE AGE OF THE CHILD

**I**NTELLIGENT parents of today are bent upon giving their children the best possible start in life, and are eager to be informed of everything that may help them in this. In this respect they live in fortunate times, for the present is most decidedly the age of the child, and more real interest is taken in infant and juvenile welfare than has been evinced at any other period of the world's history.

We marvel when we think of the immense progress made in every branch of the mechanical sciences during the past few decades, but there is as much reason to wonder at the truths which medical research and psychology have discovered concerning the development and functioning of the minds and bodies of our children.

In the earlier textbooks dealing with the rearing and training of the young, little attention was paid to the close and vital relationship which exists between parents and offspring, and which must be realized to the full if the child is to reap all the benefits which are his natural birthright. But not until all parents fully understand to what extent the health and future happiness of their babies rests with them—and not until they appreciate that wise, or unwise, action on their part during the earliest years, will tend to make or spoil a character throughout life—will there be much chance of a generation growing up less hampered by the stupidities and ignorance which have marred so many promising lives in the past.

It would be wise to write on the wall of every nursery, the motto: "Bring up a child in the way *he* should go." For it is true that every infant comes into this world with a character of its own, and it is often the foolish attempts of parents and teachers, for reasons of laziness, self-will or pride, to twist and shape their charges into wrong ways of thinking and acting, that sow the seeds of so many warped and frustrated personalities. It is recognized that all children are not born with the same social advantages; that many inherit tendencies to weakness and disease; but with full knowledge of ante-natal care and infant welfare there is no reason why we should not rear families far superior in health and general ability to those of any previous generation.

It is necessary to state quite clearly that this happy transformation will not come about through any form of easy magic or merely by



piously wishing it. Parents who would have healthy, intelligent children must be willing to make both effort and sacrifice, for in no other way can they possibly have them.

### MOTHER'S IMPORTANT ROLE

It is undoubtedly the mother who plays the chief part in the life of a child. It is no exaggeration to say that the infant's power to receive suggestion from her is almost as great as his ability to draw milk from her breast. Put into other words, the baby reacts with unerring instinct to the mother's thoughts and feelings, even to thoughts of which she is not fully conscious herself. The child has an astonishing ability to sense the atmosphere about him. Nursing mothers know that when anything has happened to upset them, the infant will frequently show a sympathetic reaction by refusing food, vomiting, or by being generally out of sorts. Mothers are often perplexed because their children, despite the best food and plenty of fresh air, are discontented and fretful. Then is the time to examine their own attitude to things of the moment, to note if they have shown impatience, have inflicted unjust punishment, or been so occupied with their own affairs that the child has felt himself neglected.

Sometimes the reason is more obscure. There are mothers who foolishly harbour resentment against some person or a condition, and who, in consequence, get into a nervous, restless state which is not at all helpful to the peace of the household. It should be explained to them that children, until about the age of seven, are always "tuned in" to the mother's moods and feelings, so that whenever she is depressed or devitalized they are inevitably affected.

When the poet Wordsworth wrote about the value of the "mute dialogues" which pass between mother and child, he anticipated a discovery of modern psychology. Child life is more of a piece than we suspect and the child can never be treated as a separate unit divorced from the lives and feelings of its parents. Armed with this knowledge, which is daily being confirmed, parents should be awake to the new responsibilities which extended vision entails.

### HARMONY BETWEEN PARENTS IS VITAL

It has been said that a child's education should begin with its grandparents. This is to infer that unless some degree of self-control and application is inherited the infant has not a fair start. Very few children are born of perfectly healthy and balanced ancestry, but if a wise father and mother put the new teachings into practice they can achieve much. The great thing is that they must be in harmony themselves, for if they have retained any childish traits, such as impatience, irritability or selfishness, they cannot expect to set the best example for younger minds to copy. And copied they certainly will be, often to a disconcerting degree. Hence, it is



*Any normal child wants to do things for itself. It is the best training in the world to let them try. In the right home atmosphere a child should not be told "Run away, I am busy," but "Yes, of course you can help me." This will instil habits of self-reliance that will prove invaluable later.*

essential to be extremely careful of a child, for children cannot be fooled, not even the youngest of them. Later on in life, if from fear or politeness they *appear* to notice nothing amiss, the impression made upon them is all the deeper and more insidious. Parents must be honest with themselves if they want to obtain good results in their offspring. Lip-service alone will never deceive the active and inquisitive mind of a child and hypocrisy of any sort is deplorable.

The mental state arising from pregnancy will be dealt with fully in a later chapter, but it is not out of place to say here that the parents should regard this period as of the utmost importance for the future welfare of the child. Old wives' tales about sundry "influences" may for the most part be ignored, but it is the supreme duty of parents so to discipline themselves that home surroundings remain happy and peaceful and the prospective mother is freed from all anxiety and strain. The benefits of the valuable services rendered by a good clinic should certainly be extended to the father. He has his part to perform, and should be advised definitely what to do and what not to do. In some cases the doctor in charge of the clinic invites husbands to attend for special instruction. When advice is desired in any individual case your own doctor should first be approached.

### BABY NEEDS LOVE AND SECURITY

The infant welcomed by its parents stands a far better chance of a healthy childhood than an unwanted baby. Great harm is done to the child's mentality if he finds that he is one too many in a household and is always regretted as such. The results are not always apparent in the earlier years of his life, but with adolescence and the approach of maturity it is not unusual for queer traits to develop. It has been stated over and over again by experienced students who have examined thousands of children and their parents, that no neurotic was ever the child of a really happy couple, or had been brought up in a home where peace and harmony reigned. If this is even partly true, it shows clearly that parents must govern themselves if they are to safeguard their children's interest.

The growing child is in real need of two things—love and a sense of security. If deprived of the former to any great extent, and baffled in his efforts to find the latter, the hurt will sink very deep. Not having experienced the joys of a mutual love in his childhood, when he reaches adult age he may find it extremely difficult to secure a wife who is both able and willing to supply the happiness he has missed and now demands. On the other hand, he may distrust all display of affection and regard it as unreal and hypocritical, and so be totally incapable of responding fully to anyone's love. Far-fetched as these assertions may seem to those to whom the idea is new, they are none the less true; and it is supremely important to



bring up a child in an atmosphere of natural affection—unforced, not over-demonstrative, but genuine and absolutely spontaneous in every sense of the phrase.

It must not be thought, however, that every child surrounded by love and care is certain of happiness and success, or that all children born in unfavourable environments are, without exception, going to turn out badly. The old tag about a destiny which shapes our ends holds true in numerous individual cases. Nevertheless, the child who is reared by parents with some insight into the facts we aim at disclosing here, will have a far better chance of facing life successfully, and of bringing happiness both to himself and others, than the one whose days are spent in an indifferent or hostile home and who is thwarted by the ignorant interference of his elders. The discouragements of early childhood seldom find full compensation in later life. Unhappy memories of the past give rise to suspicion and doubt, and make it difficult for a child reared in a loveless atmosphere to take an unprejudiced view of any new idea or thing.

### DO NOT INDULGE CHILDREN TOO MUCH

Here a very important question arises. *What sort of love* can be considered the most helpful and fruitful of good results? Certainly not the mistaken indulgence which is concerned to see that the child's every wish is anticipated, and that his cries and demands are instantly met on all occasions; for the child will very soon reach a stage when he will cry and continue to cry, until he gets everything his own way. And what is given to him quickly, and without any effort on his part, during infancy, must likewise be provided when he grows up! The person who is likely to suffer most at his hands is his wife and she will have good cause to dislike the "in-laws" who spoiled what could have been a man.

There is another type of mother who constantly demands some show of affection from her child, the "Show-how-you-love-your-mummy-darling!" type. She showers caresses upon the helpless infant in season and out, and gives strong evidence of her desire to eat him. A woman of this type may be suffering from love starvation or may only be extremely possessive, but whatever the cause it is unlikely that she recognizes the true state of affairs. One result of this incessant coddling is to make the child "soft" and encourage him to cling. Often, too, he feels he must play up to expectations to gain some special favour, and here the seeds of false sentiment may be sown. It is extremely difficult for a love relationship of this kind to remain on a sound and healthy basis. Mothers with these propensities should know that a child does not want to love but to be loved, and not at all obtrusively at that; also, that it is not natural for him to show ready signs of gratitude, and he is a

hundred times more interested in any article given to him than in the giver. The realization of these truths should dispose of much silly sentimentality, and bring a foolish mother to a sense of the dignity of her position.

### CHILDREN MUSTN'T BE SHOWN OFF

Still another type of parent delights in showing off his child as often as possible, not infrequently to the secret annoyance of the company. "Let uncle hear you say your piece" is often the occasion for father or mother to gratify *their* vanity and pride, while bribes or threats may accompany their demands if the child shows any reluctance to perform. If this pleasant and easy way of collecting credit is indulged in too often, one of two results can follow. On the one hand, the child may become so accustomed to being pushed forward and receiving applause that he comes to take a delight in thrusting himself to the front, and will resent any person or occasion which forces him off the stage. On the other hand, he may develop a hatred of every form of publicity, and acquire the habit of dodging service or responsibility. The old-style textbook says: "The child will in time grow out of that." This is a pious wish, but quite futile, for, while it is not mentioned what he will grow into, one can be almost certain that the new pattern will be only a variation of the old. How much better to let the child develop on his own lines and interfere as little as possible unless there is a real necessity to do so.

Parents make a serious mistake when they use their children ignorantly to serve their own ends. No child should be an instrument for an adult to play upon. Any healthy boy or girl with spirit resents this imposition, and inwardly rebels against it. Fathers and mothers who try to make their child adapt himself to their own pet ideas, and are constantly egging him on, believe they are studying his interests when actually they are spoiling his chances of developing intelligently on his own lines.

### LET THE CHILD DEVELOP NATURALLY

When to give and when to withhold is an art which only the shrewdest of parents learn to practice perfectly. Moreover, this has to be learned patiently and slowly. No textbook can do more than suggest certain lines of conduct, and no two children can be handled by identical methods. Every child of the family will inevitably present a different problem, and the treatment which appears to have succeeded with one may have to be modified in some way to meet the special needs of another. It must never be forgotten that in dealing with children we are not dealing with robots. We are matched against exceedingly complicated little humans, who delight and dismay us in turn by the many sides of

their characters, and all our tact and resources are needed if we are to fulfil our mission in a manner that we will not regret later.

Perhaps the parents who have come nearest to finding the happiest love attitude to the child are those who have learned to maintain the balance between his wants and pleasures and his need for discipline. It is obvious that mistakes will be made by anxious and over-indulgent parents, but if this central ideal is kept well to the fore from the earliest days, right throughout the stages of childhood, the child's development will likely be normal.

### WHEN TO DRAW LINE BETWEEN PLEASURE AND DISCIPLINE

Parents should accustom themselves to treat their children, even when small, with dignity. This does not mean that they should be stand-offish, or not indulge in playfulness and romping at times, but these diversions must be only indulged in at the *right* times, when the children may benefit by adult co-operation. It is a good plan to have a regular play hour when possible, but this must not be just before bedtime, for over-excitement will prevent sound sleep. Again, parents should avoid getting flustered and bothered and should aim at maintaining a serenity which the child will come to regard as a sure proof of an inner strength and harmony of character upon which he can rely. Without being in the least aloof, they can show quiet and understanding sympathy, and this is actually what every child craves and expects from those upon whom he is dependent.

### NOTHING CAN REPLACE A MOTHER'S CARE

The average woman, with her children constantly under her eyes, is in a far better position to minister to their deepest needs than a woman of greater means who employs a maid or nurse to take over their charge. Better-off parents, who shelve some of their responsibilities, often fail to realize how much can be lost by entrusting their babies to people who do not possess that sympathetic temperament indispensable to any one who is to take the place of a mother. What is the use of references to honesty, cleanliness and general ability of a mechanical sort, if a domestic help is harsh, impatient or bad-tempered?

These moods are sure to communicate themselves to her charges, and will affect their reactions in numberless ways. It is true there are some mothers' helps who are perhaps better fitted to have control of the children than the mothers themselves, and there are certainly many who merit the entire confidence of their employers; but at the same time a word of warning is necessary to all who entrust babies and young children to the care of others.

Because a baby cannot always express his feelings, this does not mean that he is unconscious of the way in which he is handled. The little one will meet impatience with impatience, all hurry and

bustle with a sense of injury, and begin to build a pattern of behaviour consisting largely of resentment and stubborn resistance which will not be "knocked out" of him at all easily when he is older.

### INCOMPETENT HELPS ARE DANGEROUS

Again, we must repeat that too frequent scoldings and fault-finding in the early days of a child's life will continue to exert a bad influence on him long after the original cause has been removed, and this will gradually affect the whole grain of the life-pattern. "John's not a bit like his father or mother," we often hear. "He seems to funk certain things, and to be half-hearted about others." But perhaps no one has ever given a thought to the fact that until little sensitive John was six years old he was left almost entirely in the care of the daily help, Susan, who was a thoughtless and ill-educated young girl.

She it was who told him, over and over again, that it was hateful to act in this way or that way, because she had "heard it somewhere." One day she would punish him for doing something other children were permitted to do, and the next laugh at him for refusing to do the identical thing. She would tell him creepy stories just before he went to bed and threaten that the bogies would come if he as much as uttered a cry. She secured her own peace in this way, but she was the direct and immediate cause of John's awful nightmares and the childish fears which persisted for years. All the creative faculties which at his age were fast developing and crying out for expression were hindered and cramped, so that finally he lost the courage to persevere. When, on some evenings, he was allowed to spend an hour with his parents when they returned from work, he was always on tenterhooks as to what Susan would say or do to him if she came to know that he had misbehaved in any way.

His father declared he was sulky and slow, and that school would liven him up; but in school John did not live up to this belief. He carried his resentments and reserves with him, and was considered by masters and boys alike as a "queer lot." Thoughtless teachers chaffed and teased him in class, and his schoolfellows indulged in mild bullying. John's inward protests piled up, and he drew more and more into his shell.

Sometimes he had the feeling that his parents were almost strangers to him. They had never taken any trouble to discern and supply his childhood's wants, and if they seemed to have his outward respect they could lay small claim to his love and sympathy. When he left home for his first job the drift began which, in the course of time, led to a complete indifference on his part. Out in the business and social world John made friends with the greatest difficulty. He was always afraid he would not be equal to the claims made upon him. He was scared at the thought of love and marriage, and never had the courage to kiss a girl, even when he was almost invited to



do so. He always expected that women would seize the first opportunity to ridicule him, just as Susan had done years before. The only thing that can prevent a type like John from becoming a hopeless neurotic would be for an understanding to come to him of the source of his trouble. Then it would need a deal of sympathy, patience and encouragement to enable him to fight back to normal.

### LET BABY OFF YOUR APRON STRINGS

Although John is an imaginary character, there are thousands like him who consult nerve specialists every day in their efforts to get release from some trouble which is crippling their lives. In Great Britain alone it is estimated that nearly three million people need treatment for nervous complaints, more or less severe. A fair percentage of these either are or may reasonably hope to become parents, so that there is a great need for enlightenment if *their* children are to become a credit to their country.

Children should be able to move about in the home quite freely; few restrictions should be placed upon them and no more cautions and warnings given than are absolutely necessary.

A really good help who takes an intelligent interest in the children can be a great assistance to a busy mother. She should be trained to share the routine duties with the children, but all important decisions should be kept in the mother's hands and the most meticulous care should be taken in selecting her, for she plays a large part in building the child's character.

It is because the child's mind is so plastic and receptive that everybody can combine in the joyful task of furthering his development. Almost every day we can notice some growth, some change, but only seldom do we realize to the full the transformation which is taking place before our eyes. If we are not conscious of what is happening, if we accept this change as a commonplace of the daily round, our lives are so much the poorer.

### WHY PLAY IS SO VALUABLE

There is no greater joy for parents than being able to watch their child make his first efforts at self-realization. But the responsibilities are equally great. Every willing sacrifice and every effort made to help in these early days will be repaid a hundredfold in later years. No true parent looks to his children to reward him, but he can have always the immense satisfaction of knowing that his care and consideration have materially contributed to the making of a future man or woman who, in the old but very expressive Biblical term, is "of full stature."

If a child is to keep happy and well, he must be given plenty of opportunity for play. Before he has reached his first year he will be taking a delight in testing every object within reach, more often

than not in his mouth. While he is confined to his cot or perambulator there will not be much danger of his swallowing anything which might choke him, but care should be taken that pins and buttons are well fastened and that loose pieces of paper and material are not left lying about.

The first real difficulty arises when he is at the crawling stage and his range of movement is considerably extended. If he has older brothers and sisters they will be able to keep an eye on him, but there are certain precautions which every careful parent should take. First there is the danger from fire. No child should be left in a room alone unless a fire-screen makes it impossible for him to put his hand in the flame or set light to the clothing. The guard should be securely fastened or else be too heavy for him to move. Another thing to watch is that he does not get his fingers caught in doors, cupboards, or windows. He will certainly try to explore every corner and try experiments beyond his powers. All sharp objects, such as scissors, knives, and pins and needles, should be put away, and if he has free access to the stairs these should be railed off. But the stairs will provide him with great fun and the best of exercise when he ventures on a climb under proper supervision.

### CHILD SHOULD LEARN TO AMUSE HIMSELF

At this age it is a good plan to put him in a wooden pen with his toys. These pens are not expensive, and a plain one can be made at home for a few shillings. A cushion or pillow should be placed in a corner of the pen so that the child can rest when he is tired. At odd times during the day he should be allowed to roam at will under less cramped conditions, so that he can stretch his legs to the full.

Mothers sometimes ask if they ought to play with the baby when he is awake. Yes, to a reasonable extent, when he is six months old, for that will help to develop his intelligence. But it is a mistake to spend too much time with him. He should be taught to amuse himself and not be dependent on others. If he begins in this way he will learn to be self-reliant from the start. Even quite a young baby can be left for a considerable time on end, without there being any need to worry about him.

What toys are best for a very young child? An infant will amuse himself with almost anything, but there are one or two rules that must be observed. Beads which can become unstrung, painted articles which he can lick, or anything easily breakable should be avoided. The simpler the toys the better they are. A good rubber ball, a truck he can draw, a rag doll he can throw about, and a blunt-edged tin he can bang with a spoon will never fail to entertain. Even an old chair leg will often keep him amused for hours. Here is a hint which should be followed. Try and find something he can

play with that presents no danger, but yet requires the exercise of a little more skill than usual; something, say, that will take him a little time to master, that will help him progress more quickly and enchant him at the same time. It is a mistake to make things too easy, and a still bigger mistake to extend the helping hand just as soon as any difficulty arises. Keep a watchful eye, but interfere as little as possible.

If you have access to a garden or yard, the toddler should spend most of his waking hours in fine weather out of doors.

### THE VALUE OF FRIENDS

Should a child be allowed to play alone? If he is an only child some parents have an idea that as soon as he can begin to move around he wants company, and that to be deprived of it is bad for him. This is not the case, for until a child is four he can very well amuse himself alone; he does not really enter fully into companionship with other children; and, although he may mix with them, there is not a great deal of co-operation.

There are exceptional children who seem to enjoy the rough and tumble of give-and-take even at this early age, but, until the average child is between four and five, his interests are mainly confined to his own doings. After that age it is necessary for him to play with others, and to measure himself against children of his own size. If he is left too much to himself now there may be a danger that he will never become a good "mixer," and may even resent any one trying to share his interests. Parents of only children should find playmates for them, or else see that they mix freely at school.

An important reason why a child should make friends is that this is the normal way of diverting his interest from his mother. The child who does not want to play or go with other children will never be found far from his mother's lap, and will run to her arms for comfort and assurance at the first sign of trouble. This may be all very satisfying to the mother's sense of power and pride, but it can be disastrous for the child. When he goes to school he will find few outstretched arms to shelter him, and as a frightened and timid youngster he will be at a disadvantage with the other children.

### HOW GAMES DEVELOP CHARACTER

The infant who is encouraged to play will exercise every muscle of his body, and if at the same time he is sensibly fed he will never get flabby or be subject to rickets. His senses, too, will be more on the alert, and his general intelligence brighter. Games will get him away from too much mothering, and by making social contacts he will know how to make and keep a place at school and, later, when he leaves, also among the world of men. He will learn the team spirit and get any selfish corners knocked off. But perhaps the

greatest advantage games afford is the opportunity given of expressing his instincts, of releasing his tensions and of letting himself go in a way harmless to his associates. In planning imaginary battles, a child runs through the whole gamut of his emotions and experiences a sense of satisfaction no other occupation can give him. Games teach the child to preserve his balance, and a well-balanced man can hold his own anywhere.

Parents should certainly play with their children, but only on one condition—that they are willing to become children themselves! If they seek to dominate the game, give directions and have all the decisions, the child will soon tire and lose interest. His delight is in managing the show. The parent should, therefore, leave all initiative to the child, and, as a rule, should take the humbler part. Play, on absolutely equal terms between parent and child, can be productive of nothing but good, and can help to lay the foundation of a genuine comradeship which will stand the test of trying experiences when adolescence sets in.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### WHEN MUST A BIRTH BE REGISTERED, AND BY WHOM?

*Please tell me the law concerning the registration of a birth?*

*Is the father obliged to attend in person to give the necessary information?*

The birth of every child born alive should be notified to the Registrar within forty-two days of such birth. The father, mother, occupier of the house, or any person present at the birth, may supply all details required and must sign the register in the presence of the Registrar. If twelve months are allowed to elapse, a birth cannot then be registered without the written authority of the Registrar-General and the payment of a special fee. Persons who fail to notify a birth as required by law are liable to have proceedings taken against them. In the event of the parent or his representative being unable to attend at the Registrar's office, the Registrar will visit the house and note all particulars for a fee of half a crown.

### WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF A GODPARENT?

*My baby son is to be christened, and I should be glad of some information about the godparents and the duties for which they are responsible. My husband wants to ask an old friend of his to stand for our child, but I would rather have my brother who lives in the same town, and has no children of his own. What do you think?*

A boy should have two godfathers and one godmother, and a girl



two godmothers and one godfather. Although it is usual for these sponsors to be present at the ceremony, it is not absolutely essential. A deputy can act in their place. If through illness, or any other unavoidable circumstance, the godmother cannot attend, the nurse, or even the mother, can act as her representative, and make the promises on her behalf. The godmother's duty is to hold the baby, and hand it to the officiating clergyman. The office of godparent ought not to be undertaken too lightly, or be looked upon as a mere formality. The promises made at the time should bind the sponsor to certain duties which necessitate his keeping an eye on his godchild, at least until he reaches his teens. For this reason it is better to have a godfather who lives close at hand, and who would be interested in following the child's career, rather than one living at a distance. In any case, this is a matter for your discretion. The godparent usually gives the godchild a small present. Sometimes it is a christening mug, a silver spoon, or a cash gift to open a savings bank account. It need not be a costly gift; just a small memento to mark the occasion.

#### MUST A CHILD BE VACCINATED ?

*I am very much worried about the vaccination of my child. My husband says that it is wise to have this done, but my sister's baby was awfully ill for some time afterwards. I do not want to take any risks with my little girl as she is now in a perfect state of health. What do you advise ?*

No one can give direct advice on this problem, unless all the circumstances are known and taken into account. Your own doctor will be able to tell if your baby is in a fit and healthy condition and, if so, will probably advise you to let him be vaccinated. By far the greater part of the medical profession uphold vaccination as a safeguard against possible infection, and with a healthy infant there is small risk. But there is another school of thought which maintains that strict attention to hygiene will give just as efficient protection.

This is not the place to discuss the question in full, but if you have doubts you can easily get literature explaining both points of view. Nominally the law is that all children born in this country must be vaccinated within six months of their birth, unless a public vaccinator or medical practitioner certifies that any such child is not in a fit state. The penalty for evading the law is twenty shillings. By a Special Act of 1907, if an objector makes a statutory declaration within four months of the birth, that he conscientiously believes vaccination would be prejudicial to the health of his child, he can obtain exemption. This declaration must be signed by a Justice of the Peace, or by a Commissioner for Oaths. In the latter case, the fee payable is two shillings.

## HOW MUCH LAXITY IN NURSING IS PERMISSIBLE ?

*A friend paid for a nurse when my first baby was born. Everything—feeding, bathing and sleeping, was fixed with clock-like regularity, but it seemed to me that baby got on far better after the first two months when I had her to myself. I know the importance of setting up good habits, but should like your assurance that a certain amount of laxity is allowable at times. I am expecting my second child and am offered the services of a nurse from the same institution, but I really feel I cannot put up with the routine I experienced on the last occasion.*

It is quite true that a sound routine must be established from the first day, but there are "experts" who carry their theories to a point that makes them almost intolerable. With them baby must sleep to this minute, weigh up to this ounce, perform his motions at this precise hour, just as if he were a mechanical toy. Now it is a matter of experience that some babies do better in the first weeks on a two-hourly feed, and some at three and four-hour intervals. No one knows until a test has been made, and the mother must also be taken into consideration. It is the height of stupidity to say that this and that is right for *every* child. The average healthy infant requires no food between 10.30 p.m. and 6 a.m., but if on one or two occasions in a month he wakes up crying with hunger, it is better to feed him than to risk a broken night for everybody. Baby is much more dependent upon the care and love given to him by the mother than on the position of the hands of the clock. It is an excellent plan to keep to a time-table when practicable, as it facilitates the work, but the "all-or-nothing" way of going about it benefits nobody, and the baby least of all. Bustle, friction of ideas as to methods, or a little lack of sympathy, can make the best-laid plan useless, while the exercise of reasonable human forethought will often achieve all that is hoped.

## HOW CAN I OVERCOME MY BABY'S FEEDING TROUBLES?

*I was very distressed when after three months I could no longer feed my child. I tried two well-advertised patent foods for baby, but the result was not encouraging, for he was often sick, and the bowel movements were unsatisfactory. I am now giving him a third kind, and still he makes but little progress. I am told I must persevere, but I should be glad to know if there is anything further I can do.*

The quality of reputable patent foods is excellent, but this is not to say that any one brand will suit every baby without exception. It is no uncommon experience for a mother to have to resort to three or four different makes before she hits upon one the child likes and can digest. In some nursing homes babies are given diluted

(tested) milk, which is cheaper and perhaps more nourishing. There are cases where tinned condensed milk has proved successful after all others have failed. This question of proper feeding is very important, and no pains should be spared to get the best advice obtainable if your trouble continues. The local clinic should be able to help you, and would keep the child under observation for a time, if necessary. Children suffering from intestinal troubles in infancy may grow up to be unhappy and irritable, and take a pessimistic view of life. Try to worry as little as possible, for the chances are that before long the baby will settle down to a satisfactory regime. And for your comfort it is as well to remember that the average baby is very much stronger, and has far greater powers of resistance, than we think, for almost from birth he puts up with discomforts that would seriously upset a grown-up !

### SHOULD A BABY BE ALLOWED TO HAVE HIS CRY OUT ?

*Can you tell me if it is wise to let a baby have his cry out ? All the books I read seem to give contrary advice about this. It almost breaks my heart to hear my little one sobbing, but I recognize that if I give in to him now I shall be laying up trouble for the future. Please tell me the best way to meet this difficulty.*

There is a school of psychology called Behaviourism, which advocates that children, right from birth, should be treated with the least show of sentiment. They carry this idea so far as almost to forbid kissing and caressing, and they advise that crying infants should be left to sob until they have tired themselves out. If one lesson is not sufficient, it must be repeated until the habit is broken. Now it is quite true that results can be obtained in this way, but what is often overlooked, is that serious harm may be done to the baby's nervous system. If the motive for crying is fear or anxiety, as it often is, and not a mere display of temper, then these fears will not be overcome by discipline, but only driven inward and suppressed, and later on there may possibly be attacks of extreme nervousness to be dealt with. As a rule, infants do not indulge in long spells of crying unless they are unhappy or uneasy about something. Teething troubles account for many bouts of restlessness, as do also tight clothing, indigestion, or simple boredom. The wise parent should try to discover a cause, and if one cannot be found, a change of scene or interest should be provided. When a habit is to be broken, such as, for example, a change of room, or a meal time, the mother should remain at hand and go quietly about some task without appearing to be paying much attention to the baby. Her presence may not stop the crying immediately, but her calmness will give a sense of assurance and protection, and usually the change over is made without further trouble in the course of a few days. Common sense is of more account here than any hard-and-fast rule.

## CAN WEANING EVER BE A SHOCK TO A CHILD?

*I had a lot of trouble in weaning my first child who was a bright and happy baby when on the breast, but who became fretful and rebellious as soon as the change over was attempted. I have heard that weaning can be a severe shock to an infant, and should like to know the best way to proceed in the case of my other little girl. I am afraid I have very little patience, for I lead a very busy life, attending to my little shop as well as my home.*

The experience of weaning can greatly affect a child if it is undertaken in a haphazard, irregular manner. If a child is suddenly deprived of his accustomed form of nourishment, and there is no satisfying substitute forthcoming, he may retain an unconscious fear that he will be robbed later on in life of something, or somebody, he greatly loves. Or, he may have the wish to slip back again into the infantile condition, as soon as any trouble is anticipated. With this attitude there is usually a feeling that food and shelter *ought* to come easily as a matter of course, and at somebody else's expense. Weaning, either from the breast, or from the bottle, should be a very gradual process, and all tendencies to hurry and impatience must be resolutely checked. It is just at this time that baby needs a little extra mothering, in order to help him over this very trying stage. Don't be afraid to take time bringing about the change over. Stop the midday feed to begin with, and give one spoon meal in place of the breast feed (or bottle in the case of hand-fed babies), every day for a fortnight. Then give two, and a week or two later, three. Continue to give the night bottle until you find that baby can sleep well without this comfort.

## HOW CAN A BACKWARD CHILD BE CURED ?

*I have read a number of books about modern methods of training children, but somehow or other my little boy, who is nearly two, does not seem to fit into any of the usual classes. Both my husband and myself are of a quick, active nature, but our child is inclined to be dull and dispirited, and has made very little progress either with talking or walking. We do our best to encourage him, spend a lot of time in his company, and have observed all the rules laid down as indispensable to child welfare. There seems to be a snag somewhere, and I should be grateful if you could put us on the track of this.*

It is possible you are going too much "by the book" in the treatment of your son, and quite likely that being "live wires" yourselves, you have tried to force the pace. A young child should not be urged unduly either to speak or to walk, and simply because cousin Tommy could toddle and prattle at eighteen months this is no reason to



try and make your boy follow his example. Children resent this pressure, and often refuse to make any attempt to please. They get peevish and cross if they are interfered with, and if they could express their thoughts they might say: "For heaven's sake *leave me alone!*" It is far better to exercise a wise overseership, putting in your word when it is absolutely necessary, and not before. Children vary greatly in their rate of development, but if they are handled with common sense they tend to level up a little later on. Some seemingly backward mites of two or more are of quite average intelligence at four, and not a few in advance of their age. There is no need to worry, then, on this account; just free yourselves from strain and stress, and you will, in all likelihood, be more than satisfied with the result.

### WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO FIGHT MY FEAR OF LOSING MY CHILD?

*I had the great misfortune to lose my first child two years ago, and I am so fearful that any injury or sickness should befall my surviving little boy that sometimes I am actually ill with worrying. I know this is very foolish on my part, but I seem powerless to fight against it. I should be grateful for any advice you could give me.*

Your fears are quite understandable, and your position merits sympathy. But in the first place, you must know that this constant state of tension and anxiety does not help the happiness or healthy functioning of your little son. He will not be slow to note the looks of concern upon your face, and to read your unexpressed thoughts when you think some danger to him is threatening. If you are afraid for him to venture out alone, or to play with other children, he will soon begin to think that there must be a very good reason, and will tend to become easily frightened when away from your protection.

You should always remember that some day you will have to let him go from you to face the world as a man. And later on, should he marry, he will be called upon to cherish and shelter another woman, and to shoulder the responsibility of a family. The best preparation to meet these duties is a wise training during childhood, so that as an adult he will be ready to stand on his own legs. Children who lead too sheltered lives seldom develop much initiative of their own. As soon as they have to face a difficult position their every instinct is to run for safety. The child tied to his mother's apron usually finds himself a misfit, and but rarely feels at home in the company of other men and women of greater experience. It would be much better for you to begin to let the fears about your son go now, and as each day passes, and you see that everything is all right, your faith and happiness will undoubtedly return.

## HOW CAN I BEST PREPARE MY CHILD FOR MY ABSENCE FROM HOME ?

*I went on holiday a few weeks ago leaving my little boy of three in the care of a friend, a very reliable woman, if just a trifle old-fashioned. Upon my return I was shocked to see how ill my child looked. I was told he had been very fretful during my absence, and there had been constant trouble about taking his food. The nights, too, had been disturbed. It will be absolutely necessary for me to leave home again before long, and as I cannot take the boy with me I am worried at the prospect, especially as I have no relations with whom to place him. Can you give me some advice ?*

Children are even more the slaves of habit than grown-ups, although they can be cured much more quickly as a rule. If your little son has been accustomed to seeing you at all hours of the day, receiving his food from your hands, and waiting for a good-night kiss, the lack of these real attentions will be enough to upset him mentally and physically. Good mother-substitute as your friend might try to be, she would have her own way of doing things, which the child would recognize at once. The mistake many parents make is that they fail to understand why a child cannot grasp a new situation almost as quickly as themselves, and therefore they lose patience. A child really needs a much longer time to adjust himself to new circumstances. You should begin immediately to persuade some trusted friend to share the intimate duties of the nursery with you, imitating your methods as nearly as possible. Then, gradually leave the care of the boy almost entirely in her hands, so that, when you must break away, the wrench will not be so severe. Children dislike sudden changes, but can usually adapt themselves if they are given reasonable time.

## WHO WILL MIND THE BABY?

*We have just come to live in this town where we know nobody, and as yet have had no time to make friends. Both my husband and I like to go to the cinema and to concerts, and being social-minded find pleasure in mixing with people. The difficulty is that we have a baby of nine months which we cannot leave at home. Neither of us finds any pleasure in going out alone, with the result that we are often bored, and get on each other's nerves at times. Can you tell us what we can do so that we can get an occasional change together ?*

You should look for a responsible person to take charge of your baby for one or two evenings each week. Many young married people find themselves up against the same problem as yourselves, so that when the demand for this kind of help becomes more general, it is possible that the profession of "Baby-watcher" will spring up,

and be very popular in some districts. A good plan would be to ask the district nurse if she knows a reputable person, who would oblige for a small fee. You would feel safe with her recommendation. When you have made the acquaintance of other young parents you could arrange to take turns in minding babies if you wished, and so save expense. There is no reason to risk being bored at home, when there are many trustworthy people who would be glad to earn a little money in this way.

### HOW DO LITTLE GIRLS AND BOYS DIFFER IN CHARACTER AND WHEN DOES THIS APPEAR?

*I am the father of a boy of four and a girl of two, and being particularly interested in child study I should like to know what differences, if any, I may look for in the development of their characters as the children grow up. I think that if you would give me a few hints as to what to expect, they might prove very useful to me.*

A writer on child life has said that all children are little boys until five or six years of age—that is to say, they react in much the same way to the same things. But although this statement may be partly true, particularly in big families of boys and girls, to the close observer there are signs that at a very early age differences in character are to be noted. Little boys, as a rule, do not tend to show a very great interest in people apart from their parents, and the entreaty to “go to dear aunty” is often ignored. But they love to touch and handle things within their reach, and a new object of interest will seldom fail to make a big appeal. Little girls, on the other hand, often like to attach themselves to adults, and they are quite content to be spoken to, and petted, and given evidence that they are making an effect. The healthy boy of four is often more aggressive than the girl of the same age, and gives signs of a more dominating nature. Of course, there are always effeminate boys, and there are little girls whose early behaviour gives no promise of them ever becoming “lady-like,” but the majority of normal children develop on the lines as stated. After the age of six or seven, wider differences of character begin to show.

### HOW FREQUENTLY DO TWIN BIRTHS OCCUR AND WHAT PART DOES HEREDITY PLAY?

*I have bonny twin boys as alike as two peas. I should be very interested if you could tell me something about the frequency of twin births, and also if it is a fact that the development of twins usually proceeds on the same lines?*

Twins occur about once in a hundred births. Forty per cent are so-called “identical” twins, that is to say of the same sex, being developed from one egg or ovum. Dissimilar twins, who are

derived from separate eggs, tend to vary much more, and often there is no greater likeness between them than between other members of the family. When the twins resemble each other at birth it usually extends to the colouring, weight, and standard of intelligence. It has been argued that dissimilar twins show a greater average intelligence, but this has never been definitely proved. It is extremely interesting for parents and friends to watch the development of "identical" twins. Of course, no two humans in this world are exactly alike in every detail, but here we can often see astonishing similarity in the way one keeps pace with the other in health, sympathies, and various tendencies which appear right through childhood and youth. Even when these twins have been separated soon after birth the same influences work. Often they have bouts of sickness at the same time, or both are retarded or progress in some way within a few days of each other. Research is still going on, and many most interesting discoveries are being made. Family records show that twins, and even triplets, have appeared for two or more generations on either the father's or mother's side. Wives who have been twins themselves often give birth to twin children, and that more than once.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CHILD BEGINS TO GROW UP

#### THE VALUE OF SOUND SLEEP

**T**WO-THIRDS of the causes of children's unruly behaviour and peevishness are due to lack of sleep. During a child's earliest years, it is quite a common thing for it to experience some difficulties in sleeping. This is a problem which the parents should not neglect, for the health of the child is involved as well as their own comfort.

For the first six months, a healthy baby should sleep twenty hours out of the twenty-four. After this the amount gradually decreases, but how much will depend to a great extent upon training and habit, which play an important part here as in all bodily functions. If the baby is put to bed at regular hours until it is between two and three years old, he should fall asleep almost immediately.

Before the third birthday the child finds that the world around him becomes increasingly interesting, and shows a greater reluctance to be ruled by the clock. All little children do not require the same amount of sleep, for some are more active than others and cannot always be made to rest. A good general rule is that the nights from about 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., should be unbroken, and that until the child is nearly five years of age there should be a rest in the afternoon



The ideal plan is to give the child a room of its own, where it will not be disturbed by others coming in later in the evening. However, this is seldom possible when the house is small, or the family large. The next best thing is to provide a separate bed, and to screen it off from other sleepers with a wood screen, which can be made for a few shillings from a light box.

### WHY BABY WAKES UP AT NIGHT

When a child has repeated difficulty in falling asleep, or wakes up during the night, the parents may suspect the following causes.

First, it may be a case of disturbed digestion. The diet may not be nourishing enough or, on the other hand, it may be too stimulating. Little experiments here (the giving or withholding of a certain food shortly before bedtime) may have satisfactory results. The bed-clothes may not be warm enough, or they may be too heavy. The right amount of warmth is a big factor in promoting peaceful sleep. Perhaps the room is ill-ventilated. Remember that children need plenty of fresh air and react badly to stuffy rooms.

The child may be nervous and have fears of the dark, and so need reassuring before being able to rest. Such children should be dealt with patiently; it is useless to try to "laugh them out of it," or to scold. A night-light will sometimes be of help, or the bedroom door could be left ajar for a time. In order to assure a good night's rest some parents prevent the child from sleeping during the day, thinking that he will drop off the moment he is put to bed. This is a mistaken idea, since an over-tired child is fretful and unsettled and cannot sleep.

Children who take part in boisterous games just before going to bed are not ready for sleep, especially if they are at all excited. In this case the half-hour preceding bed-time should be passed in some quiet recreation. Often it may happen that a child is jealous of an older brother or sister who is allowed to stay up till a later hour. In this case, do not bribe him to go to bed, but tell him firmly that when he has reached the same age he will have the same privilege.

### HOW TO GET A CHILD TO SLEEP

For some parents this problem is a real source of worry. There is one rule of great importance to be observed here : the child must be taught to co-operate. This is more than half the battle and will bring far better results than can be obtained by fussing, fuming or using force. Again it will be a matter of patience and finding out what method will meet each particular case.

There is a method strongly recommended by the famous child-psychologist, Dr. Montessori, but it demands a certain measure of faith and perseverance in the early stages. In place of the ordinary cot, a mattress is spread on a carpet in the bedroom, so that even the

smallest child can get on it without assistance. The child is allowed to go to bed *when he likes*. Of course this upsets any regular routine at first, but it has been proved over a long period of time that the majority of children appreciate this recognition of their independence, and soon form a habit of retiring of their own accord at an early and regular hour. Later they can be properly covered.

The mother should try to keep the bedroom as quiet as possible, and on summer evenings, light should be kept out. When, as sometimes happens, a particularly stubborn child has to be dragged to bed, there may be some hidden fear to account for his behaviour. This should be looked for and treated sympathetically. Changing bed-time to an earlier hour often causes resistance. The change over should be gradual—say five minutes earlier each day, and a good reason should be given to the child.

When the child is in bed, it is wise to suggest to him in a calm voice that sleeping time has come, and that it will be best not to talk after “good night” has been said. It is often helpful to stay by the bedside for a time and to rearrange the bed-clothes if they are disturbed. In some cases the child’s hand may be touched or held lightly, but no action should be repeated so many times that it becomes a habit, for he will then expect this, and will not make an effort to sleep until it has been done. If there is no disturbance from outside, sleep should come within a quarter of an hour. After a fair trial, if the trouble still persists, it would be well to look for some physical cause. Parents must not be discouraged too easily or grow impatient. Most children pass through some such phase as this, but with wise and sympathetic handling they soon get back to normal.

### NO NOISE, PLEASE!

One day there will be a more general realization of the necessity of protecting children in their earliest years, from noise and from noisy people. Their delicate nervous systems suffer real harm from sudden shocks, and when they are surrounded by quarrels, hearing nothing but loud and rough voices, they may be so racked and agitated that, in later years, the results will be seen in the appearance of all sorts of nervous conflicts and troubles. The infant born and reared in a noisy street, and subject at all hours of the day to a constant din and commotion, has not such a chance of developing soundly as the child accustomed from its earliest days to a peaceful, harmonious environment. When it is considered to what extent many children are exposed to these disturbing conditions, it is easily understood why a big percentage of those attending school suffer from some form of nervous illness, more or less severe. The education of children in a school surrounded, at all hours, by noisy traffic, will no longer be tolerated when both parents and authorities realize its effect upon the young mind.

It is the unexpected noises which scare a child, and not the thumping of his drum, or blowing of his whistle, for banging things about is a great pleasure for him, and at the same time, provides an excellent safety-valve. But the noises should be of the child's own making. People who bang doors and leave the wireless on at full blast from morning to night, do not consider the harm they may be doing to a highly-strung infant. They may be attuned to the noise themselves, and even enjoy it, but to the child it can be most injurious.

### DANGERS OF TAKING SIDES IN THE HOME

Nothing can be more selfish or cruel than to coerce a child into taking sides, to encourage him to obey one parent and disobey the other. Children who have been witnesses of brutality, callousness or gross deceit on the part of a parent or near associate, seldom forget, and these incidents may influence their own conduct throughout life. The woman who complains that her husband has no respect for her opinions and rides roughshod over her every wish, little suspects that his earliest years may have been spent in a home where one partner habitually browbeat or belittled the other before the children. It may seem a big thing to advise husbands and wives to try to reconcile their *inner* difficulties and disharmonies, as well as their more obvious differences, but it is enormously worth while for them to do so.

What may seem surprising to some, is that smouldering anger or jealousy in a parent will show itself often in fits of uncontrollable temper *in the child*, or in displays of obstinacy and defiance. Children reflect the hidden emotions of those about them, and it is most unjust to punish them for the shortcomings of parents, who poison the atmosphere of the home by their anger and selfish moods. For this reason, many a scolding and whipping are undeserved. The really astonishing thing is that, considering the almost incredible blindness and ignorance of some parents, so many children continue to survive without sustaining more injury to their natures than seems outwardly to be the case. For there is no class of society which is exempt from censure in this matter, and it is safe to assert that in many of the poorest homes, there is a greater sense of unity and purpose than exists in some of the houses of the rich.

### PARENTS MUST SET AN EXAMPLE OF RESTRAINT

It is a mistake to think that only grown-ups can experience hate, love and the pangs of deep jealousy. Most of us have long since forgotten the occasions in our young lives when all the world seemed against us, because we were deprived of something we greatly treasured. How we protested with shrieks of rage, straining every nerve to retaliate upon the detested enemy of the moment ! Whoever has watched an angry toddler indulging in a fit of temper, can have

no possible doubt about his heated feelings. Not yet having learned the moral necessity of keeping his temper under control, he lashes out at all and sundry, and would annihilate any one within his reach with the greatest satisfaction.

However, if checked with care and given a good example, he is not likely to develop into a difficult character like the child who withdraws sullenly into himself at the least word of rebuke, and nurses his wounded feelings in a sulking mood. Temper in children is better out, and does far less mischief than when it continues to burn beneath the surface. It is obvious that restraint should be fostered at an early stage, and parents must therefore first learn to govern their own reactions. "He inherits his father's temper" often means that the child is faithfully reproducing his parent's own infantile outbursts and is becoming every day a better mimic. It is little use the father saying or implying: "Don't do as I do, but do as I say." Such an attempt at excusing a weakness and shelving difficulty is as absurd as it is futile.

### WHY CHILDREN ARE JEALOUS

It is his parents, brothers and sisters who unwittingly set the baby the first lessons in behaviour. In a well-regulated home there should be a good understanding as to the duties of each member of the family, and few occasions for dispute should arise. In the "go-as-you-please" household, where every one gets in the other's way, where there is a general scramble to be served first or to get the bigger helping, there is bound to be a certain rivalry. It is here that the weakest member will come to resent, or bitterly oppose the advantages which he cannot seize from the stronger. The instinct of self-protection is uppermost in most of us; there are few people willing to make a complete sacrifice of themselves for the sake of others. Some devoted parents would willingly give their lives in defence of their children, but among the children themselves there is often one who keeps a watchful eye on the main chance.

Sometimes this type of child has started life with a severe handicap. He may have been the first-born and the apple of his parents' eyes. During the first years all his needs were immediately supplied; he had only to give the faintest cry and mother or father or grandparent would come rushing to his side. It was natural enough for this little monarch to regard his rule as supreme, and brook no opposition or competition of any sort without a vigorous protest. But when the second child is born, the mother has to withdraw all her loving attention from the elder, and devote herself to the care of his little sister. The older child feels that he has been suddenly, and most unjustly, deprived of his kingdom, thrust out into the cold and has the mortification of watching all his accustomed admirers do him homage to the little stranger. His reactions may vary. He may



go off his food, or become thin, and look just as miserable and depressed, as he was formerly buoyant and cheerful. He gets disturbed nights, wakes up with fits of screaming, and stubbornly refuses to attend to his duties. Or he may show how bitterly he is hurt by making as much noise as he can, smashing his crockery and kicking and spitting at those who attempt to pacify and reason with him. He may actually try to do violence to the new-comer, and there are not a few cases where parents have to be most watchful and can never leave him alone with the baby.

It is now we see the beginning of deep jealousies which may have far-reaching results. Instinct is latent and strong from the earliest days and needs most careful understanding and guidance. If parents could only recognize the *source* of so many of the disharmonies, big and little, to which all their children are liable, they would ensure that every reasonable precaution was taken to lead the child gradually to adapt himself to a new or changed situation. Surprises of an unpleasant nature, which involve drastic changes in the mode of life, can have the upsetting effect of an earthquake upon some over-sensitive children; and although, after a given time, many of them seem to accept the new order of things, the roots of resentment are only pushed deeper, ready to shoot up again as soon as the occasion arises.

### PREPARING THE WAY FOR A NEW BABY

One important fact that many parents fail to grasp, is that children can realize truths far beyond their years, but they must not think them capable of reasoned questions and answers.

The mother who is awaiting her second baby should prepare her first-born for the advent of the new-comer. He should be made to feel that he is co-operating, and that his help is very necessary to the welfare of the infant. Thus a feeling of pleasurable anticipation will be aroused and the event be eagerly anticipated. The child should be allowed to help with the arrangement of the cradle and with other details of the nursery; he should gather the impression that all this is being done much better because of his part in it. Then, after the birth of the baby, he should be permitted to render some little regular service, such as fetching napkins or bringing powder, so that the idea of partnership is preserved.

Here you may object: "Isn't this a lot of unnecessary trouble? Wouldn't the child be inclined to prattle about the expected birth to everybody, and so embarrass his parents? Why not let him accept the fact afterwards, and make no further bones about it, as lots of children do every day?" This may be quite true in many cases, but it is by no means universal, and no trouble or care will be in vain if you can help your child to triumph over the shocks and difficulties life holds in store. Honesty and fair-dealing are two firm supports on which his future can be built.

If, for reasons of prudishness or false modesty, parents evade the duties which should come easily and naturally to them and trust that somehow or other things will turn out all right, the price the children are likely to pay for this may well be heavy. In a day—perhaps not too far distant—when the old Greek attitude of homage and reverence to pregnancy and motherhood is openly restored, we may hope that concealment and behind-the-back allusion will be a thing of the past. All modern students of child welfare are united in damning the attempts to hedge, misrepresent and distort facts and truths which, if disclosed at the proper time, would help the young to face life with a true and clear view. Parents should credit even the youngest children with powers of observation and understanding, far greater than they are commonly supposed to possess, and should not attempt to shroud events in mystery.

### THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE YOUNGEST CHILD

The problem of the elder child, who has to make way for another, is matched to a great extent by the youngest member of a family who feels he is unfairly handicapped when facing the competition of older brothers and sisters. He dislikes being treated condescendingly as "the baby," and objects to being left out because of his age, when the others are out enjoying themselves. "Why can't I be allowed to do like the rest?" is his constant question, and when met with the answer: "Because you are not old enough!" he becomes enraged. It is easy to see how hard it is for this child to repress his jealousy of the more favoured. He may come to look upon them as always stealing his fun, and do his best to get the better of them, attempting to gain his own ends by fair means or foul. Unfortunately this attitude, if held throughout childhood, will not be thrown off in adult life. The bigger man will always arouse his instinctive jealousy, and he will be suspicious of his every move. Any show of superiority will put his back up, and the recurrence of his childhood sense of inferiority will lead him to assert himself by every means in his power.

### THE CRIPPLE'S DIFFICULTIES

Another type of child who sometimes suffers from jealousy, is one born with a physical defect. Perhaps he is very short-sighted, or a trifle deaf, or a little lame. Whatever it is, he is not slow to realize his defect, and soon begins to compare his state with that of normal children. If he sees that they are able to enjoy some form of pleasure denied to him, he may become intensely jealous of them, and try to compensate for his drawback, and get on the same level as the others by exaggerating some other trait. Again it is easy to foretell that in adult life is going to present some hard problems for him and that, if, at that stage, he has not learned to accept the situation, his jealousy will taint other lives besides his own.

In all these cases, examples of which abound in daily life, the important thing is for the parents to be *aware* of what subtle forms of jealousy may be awakened, all unknowingly, in their children. If they could make the effort to get under the children's skin, so to speak, and realize the situation as it seems to them, they would be in a better position to grasp the special difficulties of each child, and would know what line of action to take. As far as possible, a child should be brought to an understanding of any recognized or suspected problem, by being shown that there are nearly always two or more sides to it, and as many ways of solving it. Perhaps one method will appeal to him more than another, and that can be tried out. If it is not successful, some other means of tackling the difficulty must be sought. The chief thing is that all along he must be made to feel that he has the close sympathy of his parents and that, while they are careful not to take sides with him against a supposed enemy, they are always willing to make allowances and to let him see that they want justice for all. The worst cases are those in which the child feels he is not understood in his own home, and that his attempts to gain and hold a position are met either with ridicule or with angry resistance.

### HOW TO AVOID JEALOUSY

If we could only cut out jealousy and an exaggerated sense of possessiveness, it is undeniable that family, social and national relationships would be improved beyond all recognition. But we must not forget that the beginnings of jealousy can be seen often in the child of not more than a year old, and if the training is inadequate, or the parents indifferent or ignorant, the vice can easily gain an unshakable hold in some natures. There are countless reasons why people are jealous, some with seeming cause and many from ludicrous motives; but it is certain that in a majority of the worst cases, the first symptoms should have been recognized and removed in the very earliest days.

Parents who show favouritism, who praise one child and run down another or are angry if their babies extend their arms to certain people they themselves dislike, set a poisonous example to their children. It is the imagined hurts to our vanity which draw the quickest and sharpest responses, and if the child has been accustomed to seeing his elders always ready to spot and seize upon any challenge to their pride, is it any wonder that he grows up with the instinct to defend his own sense of dignity by every means in his power?

### HANDLING A PROBLEM CHILD

The family in which the motto "share and share alike" is honoured from the start, is the one where the child is most likely to develop with the fewest symptoms of spite or jealousy. Heredity is such a strange animal, however, and often so perplexing and elusive that



*Many children are complete mysteries to their parents. Why should healthy child obstinately refuse to eat, or a carefully trained child display a really distressing temper? The behaviour of "problem children" has often a simple explanation—frequently jealousy or repression*



even in the best regulated homes there is often to be found a problem child who makes life difficult for all about him. Ungovernable temper, intense envy and fits of violence mark him out, and neither bribes nor threats seem to have any effect. He fights with his brothers and sisters, takes their toys and claims first bite of everything. If he cannot lead, he will take care that the procession is spoiled or hindered. Punishment makes him worse and more defiant. He will not be cured in a day, but with careful handling he should recover.

First it would be well to find out if he has some physical ailment needing attention. A thorough overhaul may disclose some trouble, which acts indirectly upon the nervous system, perhaps some glandular defect which needs regulating. Or again, the child's diet may have been unsuitable and too over-heating. More fruit and vegetables and less meat may be prescribed, with plenty of exercise in the open air.

Here is a little body full of energy, most of it being used destructively. The problem is how to employ all this force on constructive work or play, and how to find a safe outlet for those burning rancours and jealousies. The parents should discover something, in which the child is really interested and co-operate with the rest of the family so that the little patient is provided with full scope to exercise his cleverness. Using his creative imagination will lessen the tension, and so bring about a great relief from nerve strain. Most children respond to an opportunity for doing some job in *their* way, once that way has been made possible for them. Marked jealousy in children needs to be helped to work itself out in a suitable and creative form. All this aggressive power wants harnessing to some really useful end. Like dirty hands, it is soil in the wrong place. The parents will have no easy or enviable task, but once they understand the situation it will be for them to lead their child in the right direction.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY LITTLE GIRL'S SHYNESS?

*My little girl, aged six, seems to be abnormally shy. She will not play with other children, and I cannot leave her with friends or acquaintances for even five minutes without her bursting into tears. I have reasoned with her, laughed at her, and even slapped her, but all to no purpose. I should be very glad to know what I must do to bring about a cure.*

Perhaps, to begin with, it would be as well for you to know what you must *not* do. Punishing a shy child is not only unjust, but also quite useless, as it helps to make the condition worse. All attempts to push the child forward, or to oblige her to do something against her will, should be condemned. Your child is shy almost certainly



because either you or her father showed this same trait at some time. She may also have many little fears which she is quite unable to express, and which you should do your best to discover and dispel. An only child suffers more from shyness than a member of a big family, where contacts are easier and give-and-take is the order of the day. Among other things, you may also have noted that your little girl is afraid of the dark, and of being alone in the house. What she requires is sympathy and encouragement and the opportunity to follow some bent which especially appeals to her. Unless she is very abnormal she must be fond of some one thing. When you know what this is, do your best to get another child to share the pleasure with her. Enlarge her interests as much as you can. Try to make her feel that in some way others are dependent upon her. When you can get her to accept little responsibilities the cure will have already begun, and you may begin to congratulate yourself—and her future husband!

### HOW CAN I CURE MY BOY OF BED-WETTING?

*My little boy is a persistent bed-wetter, and does not appear to be making any effort to overcome the habit. He is a very intelligent little fellow, and anxious to please in all other matters. Please tell me if there is a way of bringing about a permanent cure.*

Many little sufferers from this habit are highly-strung and clever children. It has been sometimes noted that they are inclined to be hysterical, and also to pass water when frightened, or when laughing immoderately. Some bed-wetters need a medical overhaul, the origin of the trouble often being traced to kidney or bladder weakness. But in a big percentage of all cases it is underlying fear and anxiety which give rise to the disorder. These children deserve our pity and should never be threatened with punishment of any sort. When there is no apparent physical reason for the weakness, great care should be taken to keep the environment of the child free from stress and worry. Inharmonious surroundings will only aggravate the trouble. Causes for jealousy, or for fear of rivals, should be looked for, and removed if possible. The diet should be light, practically meatless, and tea and coffee forbidden. It has been suggested to some children that by counting slowly up to fifty before going to sleep, they will pass the night without a mishap, and the system has been known to work for a time with quite good results. But too much concentration more often than not defeats its own end. The surest method to get back to normal is not generally a quick one. It is to stop fretting your child and yourself, and to do very little about it! Assure your boy that he will outgrow the habit if he really wants to (strange to say, some children don't, as they find they can use it as a weapon to get certain advantages, and others bed-we

for revenge, whilst a few are too lazy to bestir themselves to avoid a mishap) and, in the meantime, take what precautions you can to render it as little of a nuisance as possible. This may look very much like a "don't do anything about it" policy, but in reality it is perfectly sound advice, and has been proved to be the most effective even in very stubborn cases.

### HOW CAN I PERSUADE MY CHILD TO GO TO BED?

*Every night we have trouble getting our boy, aged ten, to bed. As soon as the bed-time hour approaches he begs to be allowed to sit up, and makes all manner of excuses for not retiring. We have tried to reason with him, but without effect. My husband is becoming impatient and threatens punishment if these scenes continue. I dread the nightly disputes and I should be glad to know how we can persuade our boy to obey us in this matter.*

You will find it almost impossible to reason with your boy if he is intent upon opposing his will to yours, especially if you have been accustomed to letting him sit up at odd times. You will stand the best chance of getting him to go to bed at the hour you fix by promising a whipping, by a direct bribe, or by meeting his demand in a way acceptable to all concerned. Corporal punishment in this case is not recommended, as it may sow the seeds of hatred. Bribery must not be too obvious for then it could give rise to further demands on his part, but a small reward for punctuality is certainly allowable.

One family faced by this same problem made a game of it instead of allowing the household to be upset. Beginning on the Sunday, five minutes extra sitting-up time was allowed each day, so that bed-time on Friday night was at 7.30 instead of 7 o'clock. On the Saturday evening, if the time-table had been kept throughout the week, the child was allowed to stay up until 8 o'clock—the family rose one hour later on Sunday morning, and so, in fact, he did not lose any more sleep.

It should not be difficult for you to co-operate with your boy in some such scheme as this, for the amount of sleep lost would be negligible. At the end of a certain period you could promise him a watch, so that he could note the time with the least effort. A special visit to the cinema at regular intervals would likewise show your appreciation of his achievement in keeping his part of the bargain. The idea is to secure willing co-operation without which no lasting success is assured.

### SHOULD CHILDREN BE TRAINED TO KEEP QUIET?

*My husband is a journalist, and has to do the greater part of his work at home where, he says, he must have silence. He*

*gets very angry with our little boy, who likes to play about the house and is sometimes rather noisy. I do my best to keep the child quiet all day so that his father can work in peace; but is this fair to the boy?*

It is certainly neither fair nor wise to restrain your child's desire to play in his own particular fashion. If the rule of silence is enforced, and no outlet allowed for the boy's natural high spirits, his energy may be used up in another way. Though outwardly a quiet, passive child, he may develop habits that will have a serious effect upon his health and future life. Take as examples any of the selfish, sensuous children you know who never had opportunities to play as they wished, or to mix with other children. They are thrown upon their own resources and will grow up to be solitary, anti-social men and women.

Your husband must be made to see that your home is not a workshop; the child is entitled to his place there, and to unrestricted liberty of action. Suggest that he might hire a cheap office-room in which to do his work; the additional expense would not be great, and your small son would get his chance of a normal happy childhood.

### **HOW CAN I HELP A CHILD WHO HAS BEEN SCARED BY STUPID STORIES?**

*I have just fetched my little girl home from my sister's house where she has been staying for three months. My sister wrote to say that she was very anxious about her, as she frequently woke up at night screaming with fright, and could not be pacified. As this had never happened before, I questioned the child. After some hesitation she told me that a cousin, a girl of fourteen, who shared the same bedroom, had the habit of telling her horrible tales just before going to sleep, and she was always thinking about them. Please tell me if this can be the cause of her attacks, and how I can help my child?*

There are misguided people of all ages who take a delight in arousing fear in others. Many of these cruel persons are of extremely jealous nature, and some have had disappointments which have soured them. Most children pass through a stage when they are tempted to act unkindly. There are boys who torture animals, and bully weaker schoolmates, but, as a rule, this phase soon passes. When it persists it can be a real danger, and needs treatment. Told in the dark, these tales can be a severe shock, and do a great amount of mischief. They sometimes make such a deep impression on sensitive children that the effects last for years, and are the cause of nightmares, and different forms of hysteria. It would have been well if you had warned your child before leaving home against listening to foolish stories. This is a precaution all parents should take. You will now

need to have more than one quiet talk with your little daughter to reassure her. Point out how silly her cousin must be to enjoy telling such nonsense. If you can get the child to repeat the stories, you can point out how senseless and foolish they are. You might also try reading a very happy tale to her just before she goes to bed, and perhaps, share her room until the disturbed nights have stopped.

### IS IT WISE TO SUGGEST THINGS DELIBERATELY TO MY CHILDREN?

*I have been reading some interesting books about the powers of suggestion, and how one can be taught to influence others. I have three children under six years of age, and have noticed that when it is a question of making a decision, two of them often take their cue from either my husband or myself. Do you think in this case that it would be all right to suggest some things to them deliberately?*

For the most part, decidedly no. Although as a parent you have certain rights over your children, and are responsible for their upbringing, you have no authority to tamper with their minds by pressing your own opinions on them at will. Besides there is one great snag. If you begin to stress unduly that they should follow a certain course, it is very probable that this pressure may make them do precisely the opposite. This should warn you always to be perfectly natural in your relations with your children, for there is a great deal more fun to be had in watching their personalities develop naturally, than in trying out doubtful hints and magical powers of suggestion.

### SHOULD I STOP MY GIRL DAY-DREAMING?

*I am very puzzled at the behaviour of my little girl of five who seems to spend more than half her waking hours in a dreamland of her own. Although she is very intelligent for her age, and has already started school, she constantly makes statements which would lead one to believe that she was hardly a normal child. For instance, she will tell us a long rigmarole about a party her dolls gave during the night, and relate a hundred and one fantastic details with the utmost seriousness. The other day, she said that when walking with a little girl friend a gigantic fairy had wanted to take them away, but she had persuaded her to wait another month. She repeated this story for several days in succession. Both my wife and myself are level-headed people and we should like to know if it would be better to try to put a stop to this nonsense before it gets too big a hold on our child.*

You would be very ill-advised to try and stop your child indulging in fantasy, by threatening her with punishment of any sort. You

should know that it is the most natural thing in the world for children to construct a picture of their surroundings, and to put in people and things of their own imagining. We have reason to believe that these make-believe objects are often just as real to the child as the ordinary folk around, and their conversations with them lack nothing in conviction and force. It is the more highly-gifted children who weave the most complex waking-dreams, and who show signs of vivid imaginative powers. Sometimes children's fantasies take the form of imagining they are princes or princesses, or that their parents are very important people. When this illusion persists it is likely to be a form of compensation for cramped and uncongenial conditions in the home. Children should be allowed to live out their fantasies when they are young, for it is a natural phase in the development of their emotional lives. When they are harshly suppressed, or brought up sharply to face stern realities, they are apt to grow very materialistic and matter-of-fact. It is true on the other hand, that an over-sensitive child is apt to carry his day-dreams into adolescence and even into manhood. This method of escape from the world can be dangerous, and must, sooner or later, give rise to sharp conflicts. The wise parent should know when too prolonged flights of fancy should be steered gently back to earth.

### HOW CAN I PREVENT MY HUSBAND SPOILING OUR DAUGHTER?

*We have one little daughter of three who is worshipped by her father. Whenever he is at home she is playing with him, and he spends all his holidays in taking her out or amusing her. Nothing she can say or do can be wrong in his eyes, and if I try to correct her he is angry with me for being what he calls "harsh." As a consequence of all this spoiling my little girl refuses to do anything she doesn't like, knowing that she has only to appeal to her father to be let off. I am fast losing all control over her, but I cannot make my husband understand that he is ruining her character. Can you tell me how to meet this problem?*

You must get your husband to see that his conduct is really a form of selfishness, and that all three of you will suffer if it is not stopped. Many men are great babies at heart, and although they may think that an excessive outpouring of affection upon a child is a sign of their great good natures, in reality they are only pandering to themselves and their own infantile desires. They are the type of parents who will not let the child grow up and become independent of them. They cannot realize the mischief they are doing and how unfair they are to the little one in this respect. There is all the difference in the world between wise care and affection, and over-fussing and coddling. Your husband should know, too, that every child has some original



sin in him, and that it has to come out; in other words, the child must find some outlet for the aggressive side of his nature. Normally he smacks his toys, and knocks over his bricks, and so lets off steam without doing any harm. But the danger in your case is that with an over-indulgent father, whom she will not displease, your little girl may try to take it out of you—a balancing-up of the situation, as it were. Once your husband can be persuaded to think this over it is likely that he will modify his attitude, if only for his little daughter's sake.

### MY CHILD IS INDIFFERENT—WILL THIS ATTITUDE CHANGE?

*My eldest child is of a very affectionate nature, but his three-year-old sister, born five years after him, is, in comparison, cold and indifferent, and a great puzzle and disappointment to us. We have always taken special care of the girl as she is inclined to be delicate, and I am afraid we have somewhat spoiled her. I am wondering if her character is likely to change as she gets older, or if the present condition is normal.*

The less robust health<sup>3</sup> of the little girl will doubtless account to some extent for her lack of demonstration. She may have imbibed your fears about her and feel she is handicapped in consequence. And she will certainly be jealous at times of the advantages enjoyed by her bigger and stronger brother. You must know that little children's love goes to those who minister to their needs, and even then they accept things quite as a matter of course. If your little girl has only memories of things coming to her at all times without a hitch, and without effort, she will show no special satisfaction with anything. Above all, never try to force any display of affection by stupid appeals. With careful, but not too pointed, attention on your part, you can arrange for her to have wider interests and, as her health improves, other forms of response may be looked for. When at all possible, allow her to share her brother's life; this will help to break down barriers. If you can afford it, provide her with a really good doll, whose clothes she can put on and off, and even attempt to make; or present her with a puppy of her own, letting her feel that she is partly responsible for its feeding and care. If you can get her to co-operate freely in doing certain things, you will have gone a long way towards awakening her latent sympathies. Your child is probably not at all abnormal and you would be quite wrong in assuming she is, before you have at least made some of the experiments hinted here, and given them a considerable time to work.

### SHOULD NAUGHTY CHILDREN BE DISCIPLINED?

*My friend has two little children under six who are never punished whatever scrapes they get into. She says that punishment of any sort only instils fear and hatred in a child, and*

*can never serve any useful purpose. I like to see this friend occasionally, but a visit to her home is quite an ordeal when the children are there. They simply ramp about the place, interfere in whatever is going on, and make intimate conversation absolutely impossible. I come away always with a violent headache and with a strong determination that if I have a family of my own I will take care they are subjected to discipline. Is my point of view the right one?*

Yes, if it is discipline of the right sort. Children should be made to understand they cannot do as they wish, if their actions annoy other people. But there is all the difference in the world between a good disciplinarian and a bad one. The parent who has quite made up his mind that never under any circumstances will he punish his child, may be acting from the best of motives, but he certainly does not understand child nature as he should. It may be news to him to learn that there are times when children actually want to be punished. When they know that whatever mischief they do, or however disobedient they are, they will never be punished, they begin to lose the idea of their father being the big strong man that, in their hearts, they want him to be. They may continue to love him, but certainly they miss something, even if vaguely, which they would like to find in him. They want a stronger person than themselves to fly to and lean against, as a sure support when in trouble. A child who knows he has done wrong does not resent punishment, and feels that after it is over he can start "square" again. He experiences the same sort of relief that comes to people after they have confessed and been forgiven. It is the same at school, where the easy-going teacher never commands the respect and love given to the just disciplinarian. But the wise parent will punish as seldom as possible, never from any motive of revenge, and only after he is quite certain that it is deserved. Those children who always get off scot-free at home will find that parental leniency has not helped them to face the rough world outside, which is invariably ready to give tit for tat.

#### WHAT CHANGES TAKE PLACE WHEN A CHILD IS SEVEN?

*Is it true that when a child is seven years of age certain important physical and mental changes begin to be noted? My little boy has just had his seventh birthday, and I should be very interested to learn what developments may be expected.*

Up to the age of seven, the child has lived in very close physical association with his parents. He has imitated them in many ways and is, in a sense, a small copy of themselves. At this stage he is very much what they have made him. Now, he begins to achieve a certain measure of independence and to strike out for himself. His second teeth begin to appear and his physical appearance may

undergo a rapid change. If he has favoured one parent in looks up to this time, he may begin to bear a closer resemblance to some other member of the family. He is also growing very rapidly, and must have a careful diet if he is to keep his strength and the tone of his muscles. After play he may complain of being tired, and should be encouraged to rest. The child lives now more in a world of feeling. If he has artistic tendencies, he will take an interest in music and dancing, and these gifts should be fostered. There is one change, however, which may cause some distress to his parents. From now onwards the mother may find that her little daughter prefers to be in the father's company, and will often appeal to him to uphold her against some order she does not want to obey. The father, to whom his son has been everything, may be disappointed to find him choosing the company of other boys, rather than going out with him. But parents should know that this is quite natural and is a healthy sign. If they try to prevent this breakaway, they will be only hindering their children's emotional development, with the chance of bringing about great unhappiness in the future.

#### WHAT IS THE BEST WAY OF INTRODUCING THE BIBLE TO CHILDREN?

*Both my husband and myself are anxious that our children should grow up with a realization of their duties to their fellow men. We know that the Bible contains the best possible instruction in the world concerning right motives and conduct, but my earliest recollections of Bible lessons were not very happy ones, for it was always impressed upon me that if I did not do this or that I should be punished like one of the characters described, and in consequence I got little inspiration as a child from this source. Can you give me some hints as to the best way to introduce the "Book of Books" to my little ones?*

The problem of religious instruction is one that most parents have to face sooner or later. If they want their child to make an early acquaintance with the Bible they should be very careful who teaches him, and what is taught. The way in which a subject is presented to a child is very important, for the impressions then gathered often remain for a very long time. A parent or teacher should be most careful never to introduce any character or idea to a young child which is likely to frighten him, or arouse feelings of repulsion. There are very many beautiful stories in the Bible which, told as they should be, will never fail to hold a child's interest. Parents could make a selection of these and tell them to the little ones in simple words. They should never overstress the moral of any story, as the children may then suspect that they were being lectured, and nobody likes that. Any bookshop will supply Bible illustrations suitable for the young, and the story can be based upon these pictures.

But parents, in most cases, are not best fitted to *instruct* children in the Scriptures, and no attempt should be made to deal authoritatively with any Bible story. For an inquisitive youngster might naturally ask questions of his parents which, because of lack of specialized training, would floor them ! When children are old enough, they should be sent for religious instruction to a professional teacher. A chat with the local clergyman should elicit information concerning Bible classes, etc., in the neighbourhood.

### WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO ARRANGE A CHILDREN'S PARTY?

*I want to give a children's party on my little girl's fifth birthday. I have never given one before, and should be glad of a few hints which would make it a success. I know what amuses grown-up guests, but I am at a loss to think of something novel which would be sure to interest the children. Can you help me?*

The first thing to remember, is that young children find it difficult to concentrate for long on any one thing. They like change and you should therefore plan your programme beforehand, allowing for plenty of variety. Think out half a dozen simple games which involve very little skill and hardly any thought; games which even the toddlers can enter into. Then, as soon as interest in one game shows signs of flagging, introduce another; but never allow yourself to be at a loss for a fresh amusement. All children love imitating something or somebody. Before the party get your friends to lend you old hats, scarves, gloves, pieces of brightly-coloured material, and trimmings of all sorts. Now suggest that the children should take turns in dressing-up in groups of three or four, and award little prizes for the best impersonations. Guessing competitions—the adults keeping the records—and hide-and-seek games of all sorts are always popular. The food is an important item at any children's party. This should be tempting, but not too rich. Sandwiches filled with grated cheese or vegetables, or with various jams, can be cut into all manner of novel shapes; the more novel they are the better they will please. Fruit and jellies can also be served, and an hour well spent beforehand in thinking out how they can be brought to the table in an unaccustomed guise. Children are quick to note and appreciate anything they have not seen at home. With the exercise of a little imagination the most ordinary fare can be so served, as to stimulate both the interest and appetite.

### HOW CAN I ARRANGE TO ADOPT A CHILD?

*I have been married for ten years, and have no family. I am very fond of children and, as we have a nice home, I have suggested that we adopt a little girl. My husband, however, seems set against the idea. He says that we should be inviting all sorts*

*of trouble, and had best remain as we are. But I feel sure that once the child is in the house he will quickly approve the change. Can you tell me how I should set to work, and if I am likely to meet with any difficulties?*

In the first place you and your husband must be in agreement about adopting a child. The law demands this, and will not allow you to adopt a child without your husband's full consent. In any case you would be taking a grave risk by accepting such a serious responsibility against his wishes, even if he seemed to agree, and signed to this effect. And, most important of all, it would be unfair to the child. But once you are in agreement the way should be fairly clear. Any doctor, magistrate or clergyman will give you the name of one of the child adoption societies, and you will be well advised to negotiate with them. This is by far the safest course, for, if you have some special child in view, you may find yourselves involved in legal disputes with a parent, blood-relative or guardian, who will have the right to raise an objection. Again, a child adopted from a private source may lead to her people wishing to see her and perhaps trying to influence her in some way later on; this will certainly cause trouble. By negotiating directly through a properly-constituted society you would be spared all difficulties arising from such disputes.

#### SHOULD AN ADOPTED CHILD BE TOLD OF HIS PARENTAGE?

*Six years ago we adopted a little boy, eight months old. We have come to love him as our own, and have never told him we are not his real parents. We have since moved away from the home town to a distant part of the country, and it is very unlikely we shall ever run across any one who recognizes us. My husband is for keeping the secret of his birth from the child, but I feel that someone might turn up one day and tell the boy the truth, and that he would then think we had deceived him. Please tell us what is our best course of action.*

You should let the child know the truth of his parentage as soon as a favourable opportunity occurs. By practising a form of deceit, justifiable though it may seem, you are in the first place imposing a certain strain upon yourselves, and living more or less in fear that some day everything will be disclosed. At six years of age the child will not spend time worrying who his real parents are. His affection and trust are given to you and if you tell him now, it will have no greater effect upon him than the hearing of a fairy tale. It might, in fact, be a good way of introducing the subject by making a tale of it. But if you wait until he is in his teens and then spring the truth upon him, the emotional effect may well be great. His imaginative powers are strong at this age and a young boy might start weaving all sorts of romances about a very matter-of-fact proceeding.



## CHAPTER 3

### GOING TO SCHOOL

#### EDUCATING THE CHILD

**O**NE of the great changes which has taken place in social life during the last twenty years is apparent in the way the interests of children are studied at school. Many fathers and mothers, remembering their own school-days, may not associate them with any happy memories, but after the Great War, educational authorities began to wake up and to realize that, if we were to be a happier and healthier nation, the children's needs must come first of all. Millions of pounds were spent upon new buildings, in paying better salaries for more experienced teachers, in providing poor children with meals in school hours, in organizing medical and dental services, and in catering for the smallest children by opening crèches and kindergartens.

Every parent knows the wisdom of sending his child to a good school, where he will not only learn to read and write, but will come under the influence of teachers who may play an important part in shaping his future life. Although home influences come first and will always be the strongest, teachers have a big share in forming character, either by encouraging their pupils to do their best work, or by discouraging them by being impatient, over-critical and unsympathetic. The great majority of present-day children really like their schools and, far from wishing to play truant, they are disappointed if for any reason they have to remain away. Here, then, arises our first problem.

#### WHY SOME CHILDREN ARE UNHAPPY AT SCHOOL

Parents who notice that their child is never eager to set out in the morning and seems tired and worried on returning from school, may rightly suspect that he is not very happy there. If there is nothing obviously wrong with his health, it is time some tactful inquiries were made of his teacher and headmaster for they can often be of great assistance in finding out what is wrong and in suggesting some possible remedy.

Is he happy at his work? Does he always pay attention? Is he slow at picking up new information? What is his position in the class? How does he get on with other boys? Sometimes the child may confess he does not like a certain teacher because he makes fun of him before the other boys. Such a teacher, from mere thoughtlessness, can make the life of a sensitive pupil a misery. Whatever the trouble, it is sometimes very difficult to persuade children to take even their parents into their confidence, and it is often necessary to

consider the problem very carefully before being able to lay a finger on the trouble which is making your child unhappy and unfit for work.

Parents should never hesitate to approach the head of the school, when they are seriously worried about their child. This will often be a considerable step towards clearing up the problem. It is the duty of the schoolmaster to give the parent whatever help he can, and usually he is more than willing to do so.

### WHEN SHOULD A CHILD FIRST GO TO SCHOOL?

There is no such thing as a proper age to send children to school, because so much depends on the child himself. If he has a tendency to frequent illness, or shows signs of such nervousness that he would not be able to follow his lessons properly, he will certainly do better at home for the present.

The chief advantage of going to school young, is that the child gets accustomed to mixing with others, and sharing their games. Selfishness and aggressiveness which are often developed at home, will not survive for long in the classroom or the playground.

It matters very little if he succeeds in learning his alphabet and figures straight away; the chief thing is that he is constantly making new contacts, and learning to adjust himself to new situations. Poor mothers, in particular, who have to go out to work find school a boon. Their children can go to infant schools and kindergartens, and mothers need not be afraid that the tots will get too much "teaching"—on the contrary they will be encouraged to play, to be happy and develop their personalities in friendly games.

On the other hand, parents who keep their child at home for some reason to a later age and are inclined to worry because he started later than usual, will soon see that in a very short time—other things being equal—he will catch up, and suffer no real or lasting loss because of his early handicap. He will absorb the teaching much more quickly than he could have done at an earlier age, and will soon settle down with his schoolfellows.

### WHAT IS A BACKWARD CHILD?

"Why is my child so backward at school?" This is the question of many a perplexed parent, who feels that the reputation of the family is at stake. There are many reasons why children do not seem to be making progress, and if their elders could only understand, they would certainly be more patient, and not lose faith so easily in their children's ability.

Today much is known about the chemical constituents of the body, particularly of the functions of the glands, and the immense influence of these secretions upon both body and mind. In some children glandular development is retarded, and in others it is over-active.

a matter-of-fact candidate, blessed with little imagination, may by a stroke of luck get just the questions he is capable of answering.

When ambitious parents are keen upon a child passing well so that he will be able to continue his education, they ought to give him a little extra care for a week or two before the examination. He should have better food, more quiet at home and plenty of sleep. It should not be drilled into him, in season and out, that he *has* to do well because so much depends upon it. No doubt he realizes that already quite strongly enough, and it will only unnerve him in the examination if it is stressed again.

### LET HIM FIND HIS OWN FEET AT SCHOOL

One of the earliest problems to be faced in school life, is the relationship of a child with his schoolfellows. School is a preparation for life and every child has to measure himself against others of his own age. How he does this will often be a good indication of the way in which he will meet and deal with his fellow men when he grows up.

It is, of course, quite natural for parents to try and shield their children from being bullied or ill-treated by vicious schoolmates, but it is bad to encourage them to run home with every tale of petty annoyance. If they speak about these things at all, and most children do not—for they find their own way of evading or overcoming these rough experiences—they should be shown methods of countering attacks, and turning the tables on their adversaries. This is not to say that they are to be advised to give punch for punch in every case, but if needs be, there are ways of forming alliances with other boys against a common enemy. In the case of a weak or crippled child being wantonly bullied, it is often a good plan for the parent, who cannot always be on the spot, to put him in the care of a stronger schoolmate. An appeal to a boy's sense of chivalry invariably brings out the best in him, and he will always try and protect him.

Boys who run away from every quarrel get into the habit of dodging difficulties when they leave school. There are fewer black eyes and scratched noses at school nowadays and nobody wants to see scrapping revived, but an occasional battle in defence of a right is certainly worth while, even at the expense of a few bruises.

### WHERE TEACHER AND PARENT CAN CO-OPERATE

It must not be forgotten that the schoolmaster has his own special problems. One of the biggest of these, and one with which he is constantly faced, is the task of keeping the children's minds stimulated and their interests ever fresh. There is so much to distract them in the outside world, so many easy amusements to come by—even for the poorest—so many things which can be done by the pressing of a button or the turning of a tap, that the very young are apt to take too much for granted and need constant encouragement before they will make any effort on their own behalf.

No child, as every teacher is aware, should be required to sit at a desk for hours on end. The school curriculum of the future will certainly allow as much time for handwork as book study. Meanwhile the master must rack his brains to find new methods of awakening the child's initiative.

This is where the parents can co-operate. If classes outside school hours are provided, where, for example, instrumental music may be studied for a trifling fee, where little plays are rehearsed in costume, some useful craft learned, or some special game practised—they should encourage their children to attend if possible, for anything that will help to widen the child's mental horizon should be warmly received.

The school can only be a vital centre and of real value to the child, where teacher and parent both agree on the end and co-operate towards it. This end should be the education (the drawing out) of the imaginative and creative powers of the child, so that they may be used to develop his character and ability, and serve the good of his fellow men.

### THE PROBLEM OF SEX

At some time or other it must have occurred to nearly every thinking man and woman, that the majority of our greatest problems are directly or indirectly connected with sex. A glance at a newspaper will reveal that numberless catastrophes, disputes and misunderstandings are brought about either by abuse or ignorance of the laws governing sexual life. Sex is such a mighty force in the life of an individual, and wields such extraordinary power at every stage of his career, that if we are to fulfil our responsibilities to our children, we dare not keep them ignorant of the part it plays in life.

It is clearly the duty of the parents to give this instruction, but there are several reasons why the task is often neglected. In the first place, very few parents have had the good luck to be enlightened in the right way when they were young, and they may have grown up with the feeling that there is something about sex which is not "proper," which must be spoken of only in whispers and which they must hide from their children by telling them "fairy tales," or by deliberately misleading them when they ask direct questions. Even when they see, as they must, that a straight talk would do a vast amount of good—by satisfying a genuine curiosity or banishing a fear—they are held back by a feeling of false modesty, which they cannot shake off. They are, perhaps, more to be pitied than blamed. In their childhood days, they may have had to find out things painfully and blindly for themselves, or may have been told all manner of lies by others no less ignorant. As a consequence they have suffered from a number of fears, conscious or unconscious, right up to the present time. They feel that sex is too dangerous a subject to discuss, that silence is the safest course.

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Another type of parent really means to instruct his children "sometime," but decides to wait "until they are old enough." He is under the illusion that, until they are in their teens, sex will remain a sealed book to them or that, if they chance to encounter any of its forms, they will neither be interested nor curious. Perhaps he has preserved no clear memories of his own early years, or he may have had an exceptionally sheltered childhood. In any case his outlook is profoundly mistaken for it is probable that, when the time comes to "tell," his children will have already learned—and from the wrong sources—more than he ever dreams of—and have been so impressed that nothing he can now say will wipe out the mischief already done.

### A HEALTHY CHILD SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN SEX

The old idea that children are not interested in sex is dying fast. How can it be possible that a child, who becomes increasingly curious about everything around him : his own body, other people's bodies, his home, his school and the outside world, should remain blind to one of life's central facts? Even supposing his eyes were completely closed, his ears would still be open. He cannot attend school, play games or mix to any extent with other children without, sooner or later, hearing some reference to sex. There are precocious and, at times, even vicious children in every large school, who delight in initiating others into their secrets and, in some cases, in instilling dread and fear into innocent minds.

If parents would only realize that this is true, they would certainly be more on their guard. Once forewarned they would never take the risk of exposing their children to the danger of being frightened or corrupted, but without making any fuss, would prepare them naturally and adequately for their first encounters with sex.

It is well to point out here, that once the curiosity of the normal child has been satisfied and his questions answered adequately, he will, as a rule, dismiss the matter from his mind. At this period sex means little more to him than the difference in structure between a boy and a girl, and there is so much to occupy him in his play and lessons, that he will seldom give it any more thought until he is adolescent.

### WHEN SHOULD A CHILD BE TOLD?

Sex and the "Facts of Life" cannot be taught to children like reading or writing, and it would be wrong to attempt such instruction before the child has shown curiosity and the ability to understand certain simply-told facts. Children vary so much in type and rate of development, that what should be told to one at one age should be kept back from another. It is here that the parents should exercise their discretion. Their task should be to follow *what is taking place in the mind of the child*. This should not be difficult if

they have accustomed themselves to observing him carefully from earliest infancy.

Perhaps, before this time, they will have noticed that the child has acquired certain unpleasant little habits. For example, they may see that the infant takes a pleasure in handling its sex organs and that neither rebuke nor punishment has any lasting effect. Many parents get unnecessarily worried about this practice, believing that unless it can be checked, all sorts of ills will follow. As a rule, their efforts have precisely the wrong effect. In the first place the child who persistently handles himself (masturbates) is rarely a contented, happy child and is often suffering from some form of anxiety. Perhaps he is slapped for soiling his clothes or for putting things in his mouth, or for destroying things. The result is that, when he finds himself robbed of one form of activity, he turns to a worse by centring his interest upon his own body. Another reason may be that the clothing is too heavy or too tight, and it is as well to note if the child is suffering from constipation and also to make sure that he is always kept clean.

### HOW TO STOP BAD HABITS

What must the parents of such a child do about it? To begin with, they must stop all punishment, show no further signs of anger, and above all, refrain from making silly and stupid threats. Matters won't even begin to mend until the child feels that he is loved and can be sure that no one will be unkind to him. Next, he must be provided with means of amusement so that his waking hours are not blank and boring. He should always sleep alone if this can be arranged, and the parents *must appear not to notice any habit of which they disapprove*, at least for some long time. This may seem very strange advice to the anxious father or mother who is always wanting to DO something about it, but is perfectly sound for all that. Parents must bear in mind that it is not nearly so much what they do, as what they *feel* about a child that counts. They should know that most children go through a shorter or longer period of masturbating. In normal cases no harm whatsoever results. Excessive indulgence is of course, unwise, but even that is less dangerous to the child than the effects of fear. And if a sensitive boy or girl is told that most fearful diseases will result from masturbation, the mental worry that follows can in some cases produce serious nervous breakdowns.

### HOW TO ANSWER "WHERE DO BABIES COME FROM?"

The question "Where do babies come from?" should never cause parents surprise or embarrassment. Nearly all intelligent children will ask this, and the answer should be ready for them. If they are told lies, snubbed or put off with a show of displeasure, they are not likely to ask again, but will certainly try to find out elsewhere. If

parents only realized it, as soon as this question, or a similar one, is put to them they are given a great opportunity of strengthening the bonds of confidence which should exist between them and their children. That books should have to be written on "What shall I say to my children?" shows how far some parents are from establishing a warm and confiding relationship with their own flesh and blood. The best course, and indeed the only one, is to tell the literal fact in a way the child can understand. He is old enough to have observed that cats have kittens, dogs puppies and that the hen lays eggs. When he has been helped to realize that his own mother sheltered him in her body for many months before he was born, he is not likely to love her any the less on that account; on the contrary, it would strengthen his affection.

### THE DANGER OF HALF-TRUTHS

Once he knows of his origin he is not likely to revert to the subject again. But, at the same time, parents should be prepared for further questions of a still more intimate nature that should be answered frankly. When a parent is asked, "How did the baby get there?" it is little use telling the child—as some books advise—that it "grew just like the fruit grows." A half-truth like this may satisfy any further curiosity for a time but in some cases, more especially with young girls, it may be a source of great fear and uncertainty later. It is far better for the parent to tell the child, quietly and decidedly, that he is not old enough to understand anything more just yet, and at the same time, give a faithful undertaking to speak to him again just as soon as the right time has arrived. No authority would advise the giving of physiological information that is beyond the child's comprehension, and there is no other way of getting round the subject, except at the risk of making the child suspect that something mysterious and perhaps rather frightening is being withheld.

### WINNING YOUR CHILD'S CONFIDENCE

This, it should be seen, is yet another opportunity for getting close to the child and winning his faith and trust. In making this compact with him, it should be pointed out that this is a secret between two—or three—and that it would not be wise to speak about it to other children. This is by far the best method of enlightening children, and it has been proved successful time and again. They are made to feel that they are being trusted and treated with respect, and it is very rare for children not to respond to the confidence placed in them.

Parents who have taken real pains to prepare their children in this way, and establish a thorough bond of confidence with them, will have a much easier task in surmounting the deeper troubles of adolescence.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### WHAT IS THE REASON FOR MY SON'S FREQUENT BREAKDOWNS?

*Almost every month my boy, aged eleven, has to be away from school for a day or two because of sickness. He is extremely well developed, and is a form ahead of other boys of his age. Our doctor says he can find nothing wrong with him, but thinks he is outgrowing his strength. He advises plenty of nourishing food and rest at certain times of the day. Can you suggest any other reason for these frequent breakdowns?*

Has it ever occurred to you that your son may be leading too competitive a life? If he has the muscular development of a boy in his teens and is matched against older boys in his class at school, there must be nearly always a considerable amount of strain on his part to keep level. Perhaps for a few weeks he feels equal to the task and then, suddenly collapses and has to remain at home to recuperate. Upon returning to school he must work harder than ever to make up for lost time, and so the vicious circle continues. If these attacks of sickness go on, you should have a talk with his headmaster. Perhaps if your boy joined up with a class of his own age, he would be happier in being easily at the top, than in struggling perpetually to keep his position among older boys. Emotional disturbances are very subtle and parents cannot always spot the trouble. They are at the root of many more illnesses than we imagine and often arise from causes we have never suspected.

### WHY DOES MY BOY HATE ARITHMETIC?

*I can tell when my boy has arithmetic for homework by the depressed look on his face. He says he hates this subject and would do anything to avoid the lessons at school. He is above the average standard with the rest of his work, and this makes the one failure more difficult to understand. Can you tell me if anything can be done to help him master his dislike?*

Most children have one or more "weak" school subjects—that is to say, they have no particular liking or aptitude for this particular work. On the other hand, your boy may have some special reason for disliking arithmetic. It is very probable, for example, that he was badly taught in the beginning and has never had the problems properly explained. Without this background, he will feel "completely lost" in the subject, and fall deeper and deeper into incomprehension. The really successful teacher first awakens his pupil's interest by showing him that it is not a "deep mystery," and that there is quite a simple way of doing it. It would be wise, if you can afford it, to let your boy have a few



private lessons from a sympathetic teacher, who would soon discover where his difficulties began. It is a good plan to make the teaching as concrete as possible. Get the boy to help in measuring up the windows and walls and other parts of the house. Play games with him involving simple money transactions. You will find that, when he does master arithmetic to some extent, this effort will have been a very valuable aid in the development of his character.

### WHY DOES MY BOY STAMMER?

*In my boy's school report the master writes, "Recitation: he has a good memory, but his stammer spoils delivery. It is to be hoped he will overcome this defect." Now the curious thing is that my son hardly ever stammers at home, except when he is very excited, and yet I am told that sometimes in class he can hardly get two words out. When he was quite a little boy we had some trouble with his speech for about a year, but it gradually got normal. It is a worry to me to think the habit is coming back again. Can you explain this, and tell me what I can do about it?*

It is quite a common thing for little children to stammer for a time, in fact most of them go through this stage when, in their eagerness to speak, the words trip over one another. This is more often seen in homes where the parents are inclined to be nervous and fidgety, and talk too quickly. It is curious that a little child does not realize he is speaking imperfectly until it has been pointed out to him a number of times. If he is mocked or made to repeat his sentences under a threat of punishment, he may get worse through sheer nervousness. When the condition becomes chronic he may develop a face or body twitch, in order to relieve his feelings; but this will only happen if he is harassed and interfered with too much. Another psychological cause of defects in a boy's speech is that he has more than one person to obey in the home, and seldom knows which comes first.

After a sharp attack of bronchitis or whooping-cough, or any tonsil infection, a stammer often develops, but does not last long as a rule. Your boy is evidently of a nervous disposition and when he finds himself in trying circumstances, or thrown off his guard, he loses control of his speech and the stammer returns. Standing up to recite before a class of boys would be a big ordeal for him, and his nervousness would bring on the trouble. Ask his teacher not to impose this task upon him for a time. In the home do not let the child get too tired. He needs plenty of sleep. Encourage him to speak slowly and distinctly, and appear to take no notice of his occasional lapses. If he keeps in good health there is no reason why he should not master the habit as he gains more confidence in himself and his surroundings.



Learning arithmetic in a practical way. Arithmetic is not a subject that appeals to many children, but it can be made the most fascinating of studies when worked out with daddy in the home and made of service in the measurement of things that are part of the boy's everyday life.

## WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF AN INTELLIGENCE TEST?

*I often see intelligence tests mentioned in the papers. I am told that when a child attends a new school the master sometimes gives him such a test. My own little boy changes his school next week, and I should be glad to know what is the object of this test, and how it is carried out.*

The idea of an intelligence test is to find out if the child is up to the standard of his age in general intelligence. This knowledge will help the master to place him in the most suitable class. It was a French scientist who first worked out a method of testing, and from time to time, new experiments are tried. Sometimes a child is graded according to the answers given to such questions as these: "Count up to thirty by threes. Supply the missing word here: 'John was ..... because he was frightened.' 'The ..... brought home the sheep.' Look at this picture (two minutes allowed). Now tell me all you remember. In how many different ways can I get from here to London? What would you do to help this boy? (Another picture shown.)"

Tests of a harder type are given to more advanced pupils. Some leading educationists believe that this method will take the place of the ordinary school examinations in the near future. In that case the quick and resourceful candidates will stand the best chances of success. Some scientists, on the other hand, do not believe that these tests are of any great value above the age of seven. There is considerable controversy raging on the subject at the moment.

## HOW SHOULD I TREAT A YOUNG BOOKWORM?

*My boy of twelve does not seem to be like other boys of his age. As soon as he gets home from school he puts his nose into a book, and has no wish to play with other children. Because he is an only child I am anxious for him to mix as much as possible, and am always urging him to find some game in which he can take an interest. Please tell me what I should do about this.*

It is evident that your son finds the imaginative life he reads about in books much more interesting than the everyday life about him. This is hardly normal for a boy of twelve, however fond of reading he may be. It looks as though it may be a way of escape from some difficulty, of which you are ignorant. Discover, if you can, why he has no friends with whom he would like to play. It might be an excellent idea to provide him with some rough material for making a tent or a hut. When trying to construct these he would possibly associate them with some of his book heroes. If he would allow some other child to work at the job with him, it would be all to the good. Many young bookworms need some encouragement to use the

hands at a task which appeals to them. Once started on a scheme they would benefit in many ways. From work-play to play itself, is a short step. With tact you should be able to get your boy to take up something that would not only get him out of doors, but give scope for the use of his imaginative powers in a practical direction.

### WHY DOES MY BOY OBJECT TO BEING FETCHED FROM SCHOOL?

*After being kept at home by ill-health for a month, I got a big shock when I went as usual to fetch my boy from school the other day. Instead of the happy greeting he always gave me he turned aside and I had to go after him. Then, to my surprise, he burst out crying, broke away and ran off home alone. He was quite all right when I reached home, but would not give me an explanation. Now he begs me not to call for him at the school again. Can you explain his conduct?*

The explanation is probably a very simple one and, if you had been able to read what was passing in your boy's mind, you would have had the clue at once. You have not allowed for the fact that he is growing, and that his outlook upon life widens almost every week. During the month you were not able to fetch him, he must have experienced a new measure of independence, and it is not unlikely that he boasted of this to his schoolmates; in any case they would have noticed it. Children love to be thought capable of doing things 'off their own bat,' and hate their playmates to think them weak or dependent in any way. So that, when you reappeared, your son's pride was hurt and he could not avoid showing his resentment. In the future you must allow him to be more independent, for that is the only way in which he can progress.

### WHY DOES MY LITTLE GIRL TELL LIES?

*In a recent talk with my little girl's teacher I was pained to learn that my child was considered untruthful. I have noticed that she tells fibs at home, and have had to correct her sharply at times. She enjoys good health and is usually happy. What is the reason for this failing?*

Your child may possess a particularly vivid imagination, which tempts her occasionally to "improve upon" the truth. This would not constitute deliberate lying. She may, on the other hand, not pay sufficient attention to her lessons and therefore, when questioned, be forced to give some seemingly plausible reply. If she has been punished for an offence, a repetition of it may cause her to lie in self-defence. Understand these points, then fasten on to one little falsehood and trace it to its source. Show the child how important it is always to speak the truth, so that people can rely implicitly upon her word.

## MY NEPHEW STEALS AND IS LAZY. HOW SHOULD I DEAL WITH HIM?

*On the death of my sister I took her second child, a boy of eleven, to live with us. Both my husband and I have been very patient with him, but he is giving us a lot of trouble. He steals when he has the chance, and is dirty and lazy; at school he will not attend to his studies. At the same time there are some fine things in his character, and I should love to see him improve. He tells us that he is much happier with us than when he was at home where his brother was always given the best of everything. Can you give us some advice that we can act upon for his benefit?*

It is probable that this boy got thoroughly discouraged with his life in his old home. Whenever parents favour one child more than another there is sure to be an outbreak of jealousy from the one who feels himself neglected, together with a strong desire for revenge of some sort. "Getting his own back" becomes almost a duty, and the boy tries to make himself as much of a nuisance as possible by stealing, lying, neglecting his appearance and getting into scrapes of all sorts. Your little nephew may have been carrying on this sort of game for some time, and it will therefore take a while to break the habits he has formed.

You should never miss an opportunity of praising his good points—not too openly—and of encouraging him whenever you can. Don't come down too hard upon him when he misbehaves, but at a favourable moment, later on, let him see that you did not expect this sort of conduct from him. Once you have gained his confidence and he knows that he will always receive justice from you, you may expect to see a marked change in his character.

## SHOULD I PLACE MY BOY IN A HOME?

*I am a widower with five children, all under twelve years of age. My work takes me away from home until late in the evening and I have a hard struggle to keep things going. The eldest boy is missing a mother's care, and is getting rather wild and out of hand. I am afraid that, if he does not come under some good influence, he will be in trouble before very long. A local gentleman tells me he can place him in a good home where he will be educated and taught a trade. I want to do what is best for the boy, but if I accepted this offer I feel I should be losing him entirely. What would you advise me to do?*

In the circumstances, if there seems no chance of improvement accept the offer. The best-known homes in this country have excellent reputations, and are under very careful supervision. A child entrusted to their care is well fed, clothed and educated. When the



time comes for him to leave, he is placed in a good situation and a record is kept of his progress. A parent or friend can pay a visit at any reasonable time, and during the holidays, have the child with them if circumstances permit. There are no restrictions upon letter-writing. Your boy would certainly do better now under careful and kindly supervision, and in later years would probably be thankful for the chance he had had of making good.

Here is just one hint, however. Prepare him for his departure by pointing out the circumstances; that sheer necessity and your desire to help him, are the causes for the change. On no account must he get the impression that you are anxious to get rid of him.

### HOW SHOULD I TREAT A HOME-SICK CHILD?

*I am a widow with an only daughter, a girl aged twelve. Some kind friends secured her a place in an institution, where she has the chance of a good education free of all charge. During the first month she was away her letters home were quite cheerful, but since then they have been very depressing and full of complaints. In her last letter she says she is miserable and wants me to fetch her as soon as possible. I have been in communication with the principal who says it is a case of home-sickness, and that she will get over it. I am naturally very upset and should be grateful for any advice you can give.*

It would be helpful to know something more about your daughter, before expressing an opinion. There is a danger that, because she is an only child, you may have spoilt her by making life too soft and easy. If you have sheltered her from every rough wind you must not wonder if she finds life disagreeably harder when away from home. It may seem to her that she is no longer her own mistress; she resents this bitterly and wants to return to safety. If, on the other hand, you have had to neglect her, and have not been able to give her the consideration a growing girl demands, she may think she is being sent away to school because she is not loved. If this idea gained upon her it would account for her distress. In either case, it is evident that you have neglected to prepare her sufficiently for this complete change of life. Perhaps the wisest plan would be to encourage her to stay on until holiday-time comes round, with the promise that you will consider the position when you are together again. A heart-to-heart talk then, when you are at home quietly together, might disclose some little troubles which, when eased, would make her see things in a quite different light.

### DOES THE CINEMA DO HARM TO CHILDREN?

*In a circular letter from the headmaster I am asked a number of questions as to the way in which my boy passes his evenings. There is also a word of warning about allowing him to visit*

*the cinema too often and seeing films which are likely to have a bad effect upon him. Must I reply to this letter? And do you think a child can be harmed by going to the "pictures"?*

You are not obliged to supply information as to what your boy does out of school hours, but you may be sure that the headmaster has the child's welfare at heart when he asks for these details. Numbers of children arrive at school in the morning sleepy and tired, after a late or exciting evening and, in this condition, they fail to benefit by their lessons. When this is pointed out to a parent he would be foolish not to exercise his authority. Occasional visits to the cinema when suitable films are shown, are not only a source of delight to the child but also very instructive. They feed his imagination, arouse his curiosity and interest and his desire to know more about strange people and places. As a rule a child prefers comics, knock-about drama, and glimpses of foreign countries. Pictures in which the emotional interest is paramount he will not understand, and will soon grow bored with them. It is not wise to give him too many doses of crime stories, although he will shout his loudest at the discomfiture of the criminals and the victory of justice. Whenever possible let him attend in the afternoon rather than at night. Going to bed with thoughts of grim deeds uppermost in his mind, will not help him to a sound sleep.

## SECTION II

# ADOLESCENCE

## CHAPTER 4.—THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADOLESCENT

### WHAT ADOLESCENCE MEANS

**A**DOLESCENCE is the stage of life which marks the gradual growth of the child into manhood or womanhood. In many ways it can be said to be a new birth, for during this period important physical and mental developments take place. It is a very critical time, demanding understanding and sympathy from both parents and teachers. It seems often that the past and future overlap, so that one can see not only the child, but the man or woman at the same time. In a sense, growing boys and girls have to find their feet again, as in childhood, meeting new sensations and experiences and learning to make adjustments.

There is, however, this important difference. The child is dependent upon those about him for help and encouragement. Nobody expects too much of him, and he is guided safely over every

obstacle. But it is usually forgotten that the adolescent also needs help, advice and sympathy in his struggle towards greater independence. New qualities of body and soul are emerging; he is often bewildered and very much at a loss to understand what is taking place. At the same time the strong urge to strike out for himself may bring him in conflict with those who still regard him as being little more than a child. All too frequently under their restraints, he is apt to grow impatient and wilful. On some days he will act as if he were almost a man; then shortly afterwards he is a child again, perhaps on the verge of tears because of some little disappointment or rebuff. His parents may try to check him in various ways when he appears to be going too fast, but on other occasions they will tease and chide him at a moment when his courage fails and he has lost confidence in himself. The adolescence of children is as great a testing time for parents as is infancy.

### OUTGROWING HIS STRENGTH

Between the ages of fourteen and eighteen great changes are noticeable in the appearance of the adolescent boy and girl. Those who have not seen them for a short time are sometimes astonished at their rate of growth. The average annual increase in height, weight and strength is often doubled. The structure of the face lengthens, arms and legs grow long, and hands and feet increase in size. The chest measurements are wider and deeper.

Not all adolescents develop at the same rate. At twenty-one years of age, when in the eyes of the law the male is a responsible adult, growth may still be far from finished. Girls, however, usually mature earlier than boys. It is not uncommon for a girl of twelve to show signs of advancing womanhood, the breasts rounding and swelling and the pelvic bones already approaching adult form.

There would be fewer adolescent problems to deal with if all the parts of the body grew at the same rate. Growing boys and girls are very conscious of the awkward figure they are cutting. They cannot help appearing clumsy both to themselves and to others, for their limbs are not entirely under control. In their anxiety that people should not laugh at them during this "colt" stage of development, their suspicions are easily aroused. They are apt to take offence at any remark which they consider reflects upon their trait. In attempting to hide their embarrassment, they often appear aggressive, and even impudent, and so earn the disapproval of those unthinking people who do not realize the cause of their conduct.

Tall boys and girls have a tendency to stoop and to outgrow their strength. Problems of health may arise if they subject their hearts to extra strain by indulging in strenuous exercise. On the other hand, some adolescents grow much more slowly or later than others, and they may have a fear of appearing little, in more senses than one,

in the eyes of their neighbours. Jealousy of their more fortunate friends, combined with efforts to compensate for the lack of inches may give rise to aggressiveness and other problems until Nature suddenly makes a spurt and they catch up with their fellows.

### THE ARRIVAL OF NEW INTERESTS

During these years of transition, when nearly every organ of the body undergoes some modification, the developing and maturing of the reproductive organs in particular stimulate an increased interest in sex. It is here that difficulties of adaptation may be noted, calling for wise guidance and advice from responsible elders.

If there has been proper instruction by parents or teachers in earlier years, the boy or girl will not be caught unawares. But without any such preparation it is likely that the stress may tend to throw the adolescent off his balance for a time and present him with problems beyond his power to solve unaided.

It is often remarked that boys and girls in the early teens begin to show interest in things to which hitherto they have appeared to be indifferent. The imaginative powers are heightened; acute pleasure or displeasure is experienced when social contacts are made. There is a sudden desire to win the approval of others and fancied slights may cause great unhappiness. Flowers and perfumes, pictures and music all have a special appeal. There is a love of rhythm and melody. Dancing fascinates most young people and can even become a craze. Young boys begin to take care of their hair with a pocket-comb, and young girls to powder their faces, while the desire to have their looks and clothes appreciated becomes intense at times.

### WHY THE SEXES DRAW APART

For the first few years of adolescence a curious timidity exists between the sexes, and boys and girls tend to drift apart, as if recognizing that their companionship would have a new significance. References to sweethearts, instead of giving pleasure, may easily arouse resentment—more particularly on the part of the boys. The young male is fearful that his comrades may call him a "sissy," and will play for safety by seeking no adventure outside his gang. A word of praise from a respected source can give him intense pleasure, whilst a reproach from an unexpected quarter will plunge him into the depths of despair. From one extreme to the other is the general rule, with a state of restlessness, more or less marked, in between.

### SUDDEN DESIRE TO IMITATE OTHERS

At this time there is a keen desire to imitate other members of his set. One must not be thought odd in any way. If a particular group of young people is inclined to be fast, one must not lag behind

or that would arouse criticism and nothing is more to be feared. Parents who are worried because their child's character seems to be deteriorating in some ways should bear in mind this compelling drive to make a boy fall into line with his companions. They could drop a friendly hint on occasions, but they should not issue any direct challenge which might provoke his opposition. Remember that in the normal course the "gang spirit" will lose its hold as individual interests begin to claim his attention.

### **'I DON'T WANT TO EAT THIS'**

A healthy adolescent will often consume more food than a full-grown adult, and parents must allow for the extra expense this increased appetite incurs. This is the time of life when a generous diet is necessary to build up a strong, healthy body. Young boys and girls working in large towns, who make a midday meal off a bun and a cup of coffee, arriving home at night too tired to digest a cooked meal, suffer a real handicap. Parents should insist that the food is adequate and eaten at the right times, and should be prepared to go to some trouble to ensure this end. When growing children complain of headaches or stomach disorders and tire quickly, more often than not their diet is at fault. If they can be persuaded to substitute fruit and vegetables for the more stodgy part of their fare, they may benefit greatly by the change.

At this age, too, many adolescents develop a liking for both sweet and acid foods. Their systems seem to crave something out of the ordinary. One girl will eat a large box of chocolates at a sitting, whilst a boy will empty the contents of a pickle jar on to his plate.

Appetites are often capricious, and can only be tempted by strange dishes. Many adolescents experiment without ill effects with mixtures which an adult would be afraid to touch. Sometimes a taste for alcohol is acquired. At first it may be drunk without pleasure, just for the sake of appearing manly; but soon afterwards comes a wish to recapture the feeling of being on top of the world. Youths who resort to immoderate drinking in order to get a kick out of life are usually dissatisfied in some way with their circumstances. They do not feel equal to holding their own unless they are first fortified by drink. These need to be encouraged to take up some interesting task which absorbs all their activities and one that requires a clear head and a steady hand for success.

### **SKIN TROUBLES AND THEIR TREATMENT**

Skin troubles, frequently the result of increased glandular action, are very common among adolescent boys and girls. This often makes them very sensitive about their appearance, and experiment feverishly with powders and lotions in search of a cure. Older friends begin to chaff the boy about his first shave, and in various



ways help to increase his self-consciousness. If he is of an equable nature he may join in the laugh against himself. But the majority of adolescents resent these personal remarks and may show their displeasure by retorting rudely and even, on occasions, by the use of strong language.

Sometimes, too, it happens that a boy or girl is anxious to make a good impression upon some particular person. Unthinkingly, the latter makes some trivial jest about rough skins and spotted faces. This reference is taken personally and the adolescent retires into himself and relapses into a fit of depression. In this case he may need a great deal of persuasion to regain confidence in the goodwill of this individual, and for a long time will be on the look out for other criticisms which he imagines to be directed at himself.

### THE GROWTH OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

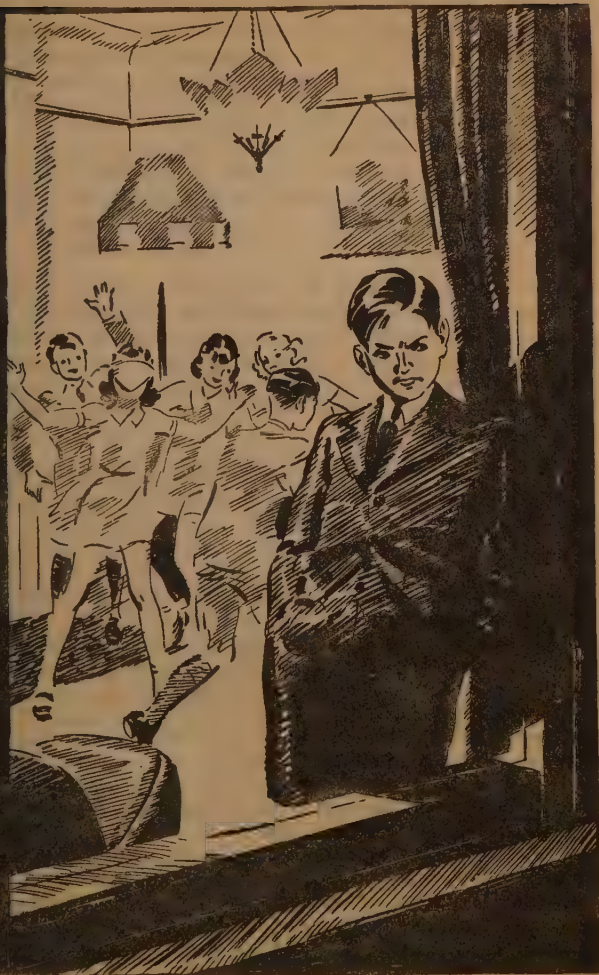
Parents of susceptible and impressionable children should prepare them for such encounters, and endeavour to make them see that there is seldom any personal malice in these observations, and that they apply to others besides themselves. Many boys and girls develop a fear of being "crushed" at this time, which makes them nervous of all fresh contacts or else drives them to adopt a bragging cheeky mode of address which is, in reality, only a façade to hide their sense of inferiority.

This self-consciousness also causes the adolescent to blush easily—an affliction which only adds further to his embarrassment, as he is frequently called upon to face new situations while growing. Instinctive urges are constantly exciting his brain. When quick decisions are needed, self-possession is lost, and there is a rush of blood to the face.

Greater experience of men and women and the world at large will help gradually to divert his attention from himself. He will lose his shyness and feel able to pit himself against others on equal terms. In the meantime he can best be helped by being put in touch with interests outside the restricted home circle. Active participation in a club, debating society or sports team will increase his sense of personal sufficiency. It is notorious that children who have been brought up in narrow-minded homes are inclined to blush at any reference to the tender emotions. This shows a false sense of shame which would not arise if they had been taught to face such reference naturally and frankly. Wider experience than the home circle offers is an obvious remedy.

### GOING TO EXTREMES

One of the most typical characteristics of adolescence is the tendency to rush to all kinds of extremes. This fact has always been recognized, and the phrase "He is sowing his wild oats" is a frequent



*Adolescence is an unhappy period for any boy or girl unless the parents use their experience to help. Perhaps the greatest drawback at this time is that sensitive self-consciousness keeps them from mixing freely and happily with others.*

excuse for any sort of mad adventure. Robust youth craves new adventures and new sensations and is always ready to take part in any exciting escapade. At this time the passions and desires spring into vigorous life and imagination often runs riot. The "age of folly" it has been called, but really it is the age of experiment. A middle course is rarely chosen, for youth's tendency is to exaggerate everything. The boy will wear the loudest socks and ties, try to out-play his companions, defy authority in some daring prank, risk his neck in attempts to achieve some new record. The girl may try to dress more daringly than her friends, laugh immoderately, frequent night-clubs and boast of the conquests—mostly fictitious—she has made.

Although parents may deplore these extravagances, they must be prepared to make concessions to the "springtime of life." The growing independence of their children must be recognized. It is often a mistake to save young people from their experiences, and when these are unlikely to involve grave dangers, it is better to let boys and girls choose their own course and learn things for themselves at first hand.

### EXPLAINING SEX TO ADOLESCENTS

Parents who have neglected to discuss sex with their children before puberty are now faced with a more difficult task. Number of them evade the duty altogether, feeling themselves incapable of speaking to their boys as man to man. Even in cases where some information has been already given, the father may feel unable to speak more openly now. There is a reason for this. A new factor comes into the discussions—the emotional one. Although a parent can explain the physiological processes, he can no more enlighten his son about the nature of the emotions than he can describe a picture to a man blind from birth. There is a whole realm of revolutionary emotional feeling about which he must necessarily be dumb. All he can, and should do, is to prepare his son, as far as he is able, for the part he must play in the drama of life and love. The precise role his child will be called upon to act he cannot by any chance foresee.

Some truths, however, he should try to impress; that sex must always play a vital part in a man's life; that if treated as a trivial thing it will bring only trivial satisfaction, and in many cases disappointment; that it can bring the greatest joys as well as the greatest miseries; that if a man is unable to find happiness in his love life, he will never know peace of mind and deep content, no matter how great his possessions.

Provided with suitable illustrations, which may be borrowed from a public library, the father can point out the anatomical differences of man and woman, and tell how fertilization is effected. He can speak about the length of pregnancy and of what marriage entails.

In the case of a boy, it is better to use charts than to rely solely upon verbal explanations. They help considerably and make the whole affair seem in a sense less personal.

The right time to go into these explanations is when the boy begins to ask specific questions, or is believed to be seeking information. A wise father will choose the occasion, but should not fix any special day for the task. The boy should be invited to ask as many questions as he likes and every effort to give an honest answer should be made. He should also be told about the woman's monthly periods.

### IGNORANCE MAY DO MUCH HARM

If the parent can so win his confidence as to get him to come directly to him with any sexual problem, he will have gone far to make the path of the adolescent smooth and natural. In some towns parental instruction is supplemented by talks to young adolescents given by physicians with psychological experience. This is an excellent idea and one that should be taken up in all large centres of population.

The boy who is left in almost complete ignorance of the physical changes which take place in adolescence can be alarmed very easily when signs of approaching manhood are first observed. The growth and maturing of the sex organs may give rise to fears that something is not as it should be, and an involuntary loss of semen may fill him with dismay and lead him to think that he is the victim of some obscure malady. As at his age he is inclined to be very reticent about his personal feelings, it is likely he may suffer great mental worry rather than broach the subject to anyone. In keeping his trouble to himself, he is apt to grow moody and absent-minded and to centre his thoughts almost exclusively upon the phenomena he cannot understand. When parents notice their sons displaying these symptoms, or showing little desire to mix with companions, or take part in sports, they should suspect that some sexual problem is the cause. It may be of such a simple nature that a few minutes' talk will take a load of anxiety from the adolescent's mind. Facing the difficulty in lonely ignorance makes it terrifying.

### MENTAL MISERIES OF THE ADOLESCENT

Perhaps a boy will hear from an ignorant source that every loss of semen presages a fatal illness of some kind. He is particularly open to suggestion, and there are many malicious children who take a pleasure in telling him fantastic stories which only increase his terror. Soon, this constant nerve strain begins to tell upon him, so that, if his trouble is not noticed and help forthcoming, he may begin to fear and shun sex as an evil thing. Unfortunately, this view may persist for many years and make him incapable of entering into a satisfactory love relationship.

Another boy may have contracted the habit of self-abuse. Perhaps he has been warned about this and has a guilty conscience. To him sin and sex mean much the same thing. Fearing that if his fault is discovered he will be despised, he becomes secretive and suspicious. The sense of guilt makes him apathetic and unwilling to mix with other boys. Perhaps he was an intelligent child, but now he finds it difficult to concentrate on anything. There may be times when he makes a firm resolve to break the habit, and for a while he is wonderfully cheered at the thought of his decision. Then, giving way to temptation again, he feels more sinful than ever, and the loss of self-respect as the result of his broken resolution is not the least of his troubles.

### HOW TO HELP A SEX-RIDDEN BOY

How can such a boy be helped? First of all he should not be blamed, but encouraged to get rid of his sense of guilt. He should know that it is quite natural for a normal boy of his age to have sex feelings; it is a sign of his developing manhood and, therefore, an occasion for pride and not for shame. But he should not allow these feelings to master him; he should try to keep them under control. Every healthy boy, it can be pointed out, is confronted with the same problem as himself, and has the same struggles and temptations. He can disbelieve almost all he hears about the dangers to health, and think instead of the positive side of sex. Men, he can be told, must be well sexed in order to achieve anything worth while. He should throw his virile feelings into his games or his job and make a success of them.

This boy must be persuaded to lead a more active existence so that all his energies will be employed. Camping, hiking, and all forms of outdoor life in the companionship of other boys and girls will take his mind off himself. As his courage returns he should find life so good and so full of adventure that no time is left for brooding over imaginary ills.

### THE DANGER OF GOING TO QUACKS

There are certain quacks who reap profit from the doubts and fears of young adolescents. They insert craftily worded advertisements in the newspapers and send out booklets and leaflets calculated to arouse anxiety by relating the terrible results which follow the practice of masturbation or self-abuse. The frightened youth is assured, however, that he can be free of all his troubles by taking regular doses of a magic medicine or by following certain prescriptions. And, of course, the fee must be sent in advance!

A parent who discovers that his boy is having such trash posted to him should write to the firm, and without mincing words, tell them their addressee is a minor and forbid them to communicate with



him again. At the same time the opportunity should be taken of showing the boy the stupidity of the whole thing.

### NEED FOR CONTROL

A different but no less urgent problem arises when an adolescent boy is suspected of sexual adventure with some girl or woman. A certain class of adolescents retain the failings of children where the practice of control and restraint is concerned. Caring for nothing but the immediate satisfaction of their appetites, they are apt to succumb to the first temptation. Another highly imaginative type regard illicit sex relations as the height of romance. Other youths may come under the pernicious influence of a fast set, who urge them to intimacies of this sort to prove themselves "men of the world."

There is a danger attached to these promiscuous experiments apart from the risk of venereal infections. It is known that a man's sexual life may be greatly influenced by his first experience. If circumstances should give rise to feelings of disgust or self-reproach, inhibitions may be set up which, persisting for many years, would tend to make a happy marriage impossible.

It is not always easy for an adolescent to submit himself to discipline in the face of temptations of this sort. To act first and think afterwards is, to youth, the more natural course to follow. How he will act depends to a great extent upon his earlier training and his feeling of responsibility. Parents who believe their sons are acting unwisely should suspect some stimulus is lacking which would give a more healthful direction to his life, for at their age there are many tasks which should keep them fully employed. If too much time is frittered away in amorous adventure, it may well be because these youths realize they are failures elsewhere, and so fall back upon the easiest mode of self-expression. Any opportunity helping them to a surer grip on life will, if acted upon, prove the best solution.

### WARNING AGAINST SPECIAL DANGERS

No wise father should neglect to tell his son of the danger of venereal disease. Prudery here, leading to a disinclination to discuss this unsavoury subject, may be bought at a very high price. It is unfair that a youth should be ignorant of the ravages such illness can cause. Unfortunately, young girls who have been contaminated are most liable to spread this scourge.

The father should point out that when a young man has been infected seriously it may take a long time for his system to recover. There is also the risk that should he marry before he is well, the disease may be transmitted to his wife and children with grievous results. Children born of syphilitic parents are sometimes blind, or develop other serious disabilities.

Information should never be given in such a way as to arouse undue fear. Some parents think there is no point in discussing this matter with their children who, they believe, have no inclinations to lead an unchaste life. But this is a serious mistake, for, in the case where ignorance has not protected a young man from infection, the resulting tragedy will affect every side of his career. He will not thank those who could have warned him of a danger of which he was unaware. Today, many doctors advocate that no young man should be allowed to marry without having obtained a medical certificate to show that he is free from venereal diseases. This would be a valuable safeguard, which before many years have passed may become law. It is already insisted upon in some of the states of the U.S.A.

### PREPARING A GIRL FOR MENSTRUATION

A mother should prepare her daughter some time in advance for the onset of menstruation, and not leave her to find out for herself from some outside and, possibly, most undesirable source. Most young girls have their first period between thirteen and a half and fourteen and a half years of age, although it occurs earlier in some cases and later in others. A sensible mother will be careful not to stress the handicap to which an adolescent girl is subjected at this time, and should certainly say nothing to frighten her in any way. She should explain that this is a natural function which, so long as the general health is maintained, should be accompanied by little pain. It is known that the extent of the discomfort experienced at this time depends largely upon the mental attitude held by the girl. If the mother has assured her she can go about her ordinary tasks, taking a little more care than usual not to tire herself, and resting now and then when the limbs seem to drag or there are pains in the back, menstruation may give very little trouble. On the other hand, a nervous parent, who is constantly suggesting that this or that is harmful and must not be done, and hinting that it will be necessary to consider oneself an invalid for some days and give up all activities, is doing her daughter a very great disservice.

In such cases the periods may come to be dreaded, or there may be a temptation to use the occasion to avoid all responsibilities. To a girl of weak physique, every consideration should be given at these times. But modern medicine, in drawing attention to the wisdom of adopting a positive attitude to this function, condemns the old-fashioned view which would make a girl a useless member of society for some days in every month.

### IGNORANCE MAY RESULT IN DANGEROUS SHOCK

Unprepared girls, surprised by a first period, may easily suffer a severe nervous shock, and think that some harm has come to them or that they have been wounded in some way. In this case a

serious problem arises, for their fears will not be overcome at once and in some form or other may persist and injure their health seriously. They must be reassured and told that every healthy woman functions in this way. At the same time it should be pointed out that this is really an occasion for pride, because it shows that womanhood and the ability to bear children have been attained.

### HOW TO HANDLE "TOMBOYS"

In spite of being informed as to the nature of her periods, a girl may come to view the function with dislike and wish she had been born a boy. Perhaps menstruation has been attended by pain and sickness, and so prevented her from carrying on her work as usual. She resents this bitterly, and thinks of the immunity her boy friends enjoy. This is an unfortunate attitude to adopt, for it will colour all her relationships with men, and may make her incapable of entering into a happy marriage. Daughters who hold these views should have attention given to their physical condition, and encouraged to adopt a strictly hygienic mode of life. The important thing is to get their co-operation, without which other remedial measures lose most of their value.

One girl who was always deploring her sex, declaring she never wished to have children of her own, was greatly helped by the friendship of a happily married friend. She went to stay in her house for some months, and became interested in the family and their activities. After a time, she offered to superintend some of the children's tasks, and finally became very attached to them.

The married friend was aware of her attitude to men and marriage, but tactfully refrained from discussing the subject with her directly. Now and again, however, she dropped a hint so that before the girl left they were able to have several heart-to-heart conversations together. The result was that the girl came to see how prejudiced many of her views had been. When parents seem unable to influence their daughters, it sometimes happens a friend more of the girl's own age will find a way with happier results.

### WHAT A MOTHER SHOULD TELL ADOLESCENT DAUGHTER

A delicate problem arises when it comes to discussing the sex functions and marriage with an adolescent girl. It must be remembered that a girl is far more implicated than the boy; that motherhood means much more to a woman in a physical sense than fatherhood does to a man. Adolescent boys, when shown diagrams and physiological charts, will regard these in a more or less detached frame of mind. But it is easy to understand some young girls might be alarmed at illustrations depicting, say, the various stages of embryonic development. It might be well at this time to state the facts of birth without reference to pictorial aid. In no case should

information be given before one is assured that the girl is able to assimilate the facts without any risk of mental shock. It is not a case of being squeamish here, but of understanding how impressionable young minds react to vital facts. Parents should know something of their daughter's mentality, and be guided by their own insight and wisdom as to the time and manner of explaining sex.

### THE OVER-SENSITIVE GIRL

Another kind of problem comes to the fore when a sensitive girl believes that at the time of her monthly indisposition everybody is conscious of the fact, and is looking upon her with disdain. She has a feeling of unworthiness, wants to hide away from people, and perhaps bursts into tears if addressed at all abruptly. At these times, she will shun all society and seize upon every excuse to be alone. If she is in business she may stay away from her work for a few days, or will perform her job so badly as to invite comment. At the same time any inquiry concerning her health will be resented. A girl in this state will quickly develop an inferiority complex.

One adolescent girl of this type was the despair of her parents and employer. She was constantly accusing others of despising her and was afraid to stand up to any problem which would compel her to act on her own responsibility. Her father died suddenly, leaving his family in poverty. The mother fell ill, and the task of providing for her and a little brother fell upon this girl. Two courses were open to her. She could refuse to shoulder this unexpected burden and withdraw, or, rising to the occasion, offer to play a more important part in life than she had ever played before. She accepted the challenge, threw herself with fresh energy into her work, forgetting her own troubles in the struggle to keep things going and thus she won confidence and success at the same time. Discussion and argument are not sufficient to win over girls with neurotic tendencies to a saner outlook upon things. It is usually the advent of some unexpected and urgent call upon their energies which proves the saviour of the situation.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### WHY DOES MY BOY DISLIKE PHYSICAL ACTION?

*"Give the lad time," says my husband, "and he will grow out of it." But I do not feel that this is the best advice regarding my son of fifteen who, thin and weedy looking, watches play at a distance, and seems afraid to join in any game at all. It is curious that he has no particular hobby; in fact he does nothing very much in his spare time . . . merely moons about. Would you please give me some advice on this problem, and the reason for his apparent dislike of physical action?*

Your son is at a critical stage of development and may easily be outgrowing his strength. If this is the case, he may well be lacking in energy and have no surplus to spend on games or social pursuits. A feeling of lassitude and "it's not worth while" would take hold of him, making it impossible to work up enthusiasm for any task requiring a little effort. Concentration would also be difficult. It is likely he realizes his handicaps and may be depressed because he cannot get on top of them. Boys of his age are very afraid of criticism, and refuse to take part in games if they think they will do so badly as to be noticeable. It is also a strange fact that just at this time, when friendships should be the strongest, adolescents of his temperament prefer their own company. In many ways they are secretive and unsociable.

When Nature has had time to balance things up, a rapid and all-round improvement may set in. Surprising changes can take place within a year or two in your boy's condition. It would be wrong for you to show impatience or to force him unduly. What he needs is courage to face a changing world. Your husband should find out if he has any sexual fears. He should take the lad out with him as much as possible, and give him a chance to participate in a wider and more satisfying life.

One father, who had a son much like your own, went with him to a holiday camp for a fortnight, where the sea air and a totally different environment did wonders to stimulate him. For your part you should see that your boy's diet is ample, appetizing and nourishing. Meals should be regular, and from time to time he should be encouraged to suggest one of his favourite dishes. If you think it advisable, he could be overhauled by your family doctor.

### WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF ROUND SHOULDERS?

*Everybody is saying that my daughter, who is nearly fifteen, is getting very round-shouldered and beginning to stoop. I am so sorry about this, as she used to hold herself well, and had a really pretty walk. I have told her about it until I am tired, but she does not seem to improve. She complains of her school desk being too low, so that she has to bend over to see her books properly. Do you think I ought to speak to the headmistress about this, as it seems a very important matter to me?*

It is possible that your daughter has good cause for complaining about the school seating, and this should certainly receive attention. But before you investigate this, it would be well to find out if there is not something wrong with the girl herself. Growing children who develop round shoulders, or show a tendency to be knock-kneed or flat-footed, are often suffering from some fear which keeps their muscles tense, and this helps to maintain the faulty postures. You



should inquire if your daughter is at all unhappy, or if anything worrying her. Such a condition is more likely to account for her trouble than a defective desk. If her attitude is one of "I don't care," then better seating accommodation would not help much, and even physical exercises could benefit her little. If you can discover no cause for unhappiness at home, or in connection with her intimate friends, you should certainly consult the headmistress. Your daughter will not lose her round shoulders *until she really wants to*, and if her present mode of life tends to discourage her, the first thing to be done is to trace the cause and endeavour to put things right. Then improvement would not only be possible, but might even be rapid.

### SHOULD "WEAK" BOYS GO IN FOR ATHLETICS?

*My son is anxious to start practising for a bicycle race, but as he was not very strong as a youngster, I am hesitating about giving him permission. He is good at most games, even strenuous ones, and has carried off several prizes. But when it comes to a scout's route march, or standing on parade for some time at a stretch, he gets very tired, and has been obliged to fall out. Ought I to put a damper on this new idea of his?*

No; at least, not before you have had him medically examined to see if there is any weak spot in his constitution which might give him trouble under exceptional strain. It seems that when his mind is occupied in a competitive game he can carry on without showing any undue symptoms of fatigue, but when it is a question of marching in formation or enduring a monotonous wait, he is not always equal to the task. The reason for this may be that his heart is more in action in sports than in following an ordinary routine task. His nervous system seems to need some sort of a stimulus to keep him going. When he is actively engaged in his games he has no time to pay attention to his own physical and mental reactions. Once you are satisfied that he can exercise safely at sports he is fond of, you should drop your fears and let him go ahead.

### DOES SMOKING REALLY HARM YOUNG PEOPLE?

*I have a girl of eighteen and a boy two years younger. My daughter smokes too many cigarettes for my liking, for which I enjoy an occasional pipe, my wife does not smoke at all. I know it is useless to forbid my daughter her cigarettes, but I am annoyed when she tempts the boy to indulge. He always refuses when I am present, but the other day I caught him smoking in his bedroom. Apart from the stock argument about stunting the growth, etc., will you please tell me if smoking is definitely bad for young people and why, and how I can impress this upon my children?*

This question troubles many parents. The solution is made more difficult when adolescents retort—as they will—that “what is good for you cannot be bad for me.” When the father smokes, he will find it goes somewhat against the grain to punish a young defaulter. Many doctors state as a mature judgment that the excessive absorption of nicotine by young women smokers has a detrimental effect upon the reproductive system. They are by no means as unanimous in their opinions where young men are concerned. Adolescents begin to smoke not because they like it, but to express their independence and sense of manhood. The real danger arises when there is a possibility that they are so dominated by the habit—as with any other habit—that it is sapping their powers of concentration. When young people cannot tackle a job without the stimulus of a smoke or a drink it is time they took themselves in hand. Chain-smokers are slave-smokers, and have surrendered their independence. The extent of their bondage can be measured by their discomfort when they are forced to give up the habit for a time.

Your wisest plan would be to talk the matter over with your children in a reasonable spirit. Put it to them that being grown-up means having the right to make a free choice. In this case, who is going to be master—the cigarette or themselves? You could set them an example of self-discipline by stating your intention to restrict your smoking to so many pipes a day and your willingness to stop altogether on some days. Invite them in a sporting spirit to make some promise of limitation, but only when they really intend to carry it out. This is a far better plan than trying coercive measures and it has been found successful time and again in actual practice.

### HOW CAN I CURE MY BOY'S FADS?

*My boy, seventeen years old, is always studying his health. At table he will refuse to eat certain dishes because he believes they are bad for him. If I do not make his tea and coffee in a certain way he gets very angry. His bed must be made just so, and his linen changed much more frequently than necessary. He reads all the patent medicine advertisements in the papers, and thinks he has the symptoms of almost every ailment described. Our postman is continually bringing trial samples of some cure or other which my son seizes upon as if they were treasure trove. When we chaff him he grows furious. The whole thing is now getting beyond a joke, especially as we can see nothing wrong with him, and his appetite is excellent for the things he likes. Can you explain his fads and say how he can be cured?*

Strong personal characteristics begin to appear during adolescence and often lead to all kinds of extravagances. Some youths seem to pay not the slightest attention to their health and take all sorts of

unnecessary risks, while others are terrified at the slightest sign that there may be something wrong with them. The latter type are generally obsessed with "self" and all their interests centre round their own bodies, so that their health becomes an obsession and they may easily become neurotic unless they are brought to see that this conduct is fundamentally foolish and selfish. Without such warning, life is soon a burden both to them and their families.

A possible cause for this "faddishness" about food is that it has been suggested to the youth from childhood up that "Father daren't touch this" or "None of your family can digest that." If the table talk, too, has centred for any length of time on illnesses or food poisoning, it might quite easily have affected a sensitive child and done him a great deal of psychological harm.

However, if neither of these is the cause, he may have taken his cue from some other food faddist of his acquaintance, or he may simply have adopted this attitude to his food and clothes as a way of impressing his importance on the family. At his age he should have a healthy appetite and be able to enjoy almost anything.

In any case, ask your doctor to examine him, and if he finds him fit, ask him to impress on the boy that such undue concentration on imaginary ills and indiscriminate taking of drugs may well bring on a real illness. At the same time, you should always make allowance for the restlessness of adolescence, and you can be pretty sure that the fad will pass as soon as some bigger interest comes into his life.

### WHY DOES MY GIRL NEGLECT HER APPEARANCE?

*My daughter of fifteen is definitely slovenly and untidy to a degree. Once she was not like this at all; but lately she is impossible. Her hair is badly done, if done at all, and her sense of cleanliness seems to have disappeared. Her fingernails, for instance, are a disgrace and, though I chide her, she does not change for the better. Why has this slovenly and untidy phase (for I hope it is that, and will pass) attacked her? What is the reason for such sudden development of a trait so undesirable?*

At the onset of puberty the character of many boys and girls seems sometimes to undergo a complete change. A slack and grubby child becomes tidy and orderly almost overnight, whilst another who was formerly "as clean as a new pin" suddenly turns careless and has to be told to wash his face and brush his clothes.

Your daughter is at a very difficult stage of life. If—and it seems probable—she is not enjoying robust health, a great strain will be thrown upon her system. She may feel so tired and depressed that her personal appearance becomes a matter of complete indifference. In other words, she is shirking the social responsibility which every

adolescent is called upon to accept, and is adopting the attitude of "I don't care what people think of me." Another possible reason is that in some way she has become greatly discouraged. Is your "chiding" so excessive that she is made to feel useless in the home? Is there by any chance another sister who is often praised? You should make sure, first of all, that she is not ailing physically. Stop scolding her; try to enter into her feelings in a sympathetic spirit. Next, do something to bring a new interest into her life—send her for a short holiday, buy her a new frock or a nice manicure set. Persuade her to do some special job for you, which will prove your trust in her. Do anything, in fact, which will increase her self-respect. Many young girls pass through this phase, but it generally lasts only a short time, and if you follow this advice you soon may expect to see a great improvement.

### WHY DOESN'T MY BOY GROW UP?

*I have an only son of nearly fifteen, who has always enjoyed good health, but seems to me to be very young for his age. For instance, he prefers to play with the little children next door, rather than with boys of his own size, and still finds the toys he had given him years ago as entertaining as ever. Once or twice I have tried to speak to him about certain things which I think a growing boy should know, but he showed no interest and turned the conversation to something else. Do you think this conduct is natural at his age? What do you advise me to do about it?*

Your boy's development seems to be retarded in some way. It would be interesting to know if his school work is up to the usual standard. If so, you may be sure he has reasons for wishing to remain a child, and is shirking all that growing-up would entail. An only child has a position of importance in the family, where his rights are never challenged by other children and where he is apt to be given things far too easily. Under these conditions it is difficult not to be spoiled. When your boy has to pit himself against his equals, it is likely that he fears defeat. If he is not certain of coming out on top he will not play at all, for he can always run home to his own undisputed kingdom. Choosing much younger companions shows his desire to be leader all the time. You should give your son every encouragement to strike out for himself, and to make fresh contacts. Persuade him to join the Scouts, or go holidaying with a crowd of youngsters. Using tact, try to bring about situations—the more the better—which will compel him to fall back on his own resources.

You need not worry because as yet he does not seem to be sexually awakened. It is better for this instinct to remain dormant for a time than to be aroused prematurely. Boys, unlike girls, mature

sometimes with such a rush that they are almost overwhelmed by the experience. If you are observant you will know when it will be advisable to speak to him.

### WHAT MAKES MY DAUGHTER TALK IN HER SLEEP?

*I am greatly troubled by my daughter, now in her early teens, who talks a lot in her sleep. Certain things I have noted indicate that "big" subjects mentioned in books she must have read, trouble her to a large degree. She is a nice little thing, and I hate the thought of her being unhappy. Mind you, she has never disclosed to me anything of the nature; but it seems obvious that something troubles her at times, else she would not talk in her sleep—and vehemently at that—about this particular aspect of life. Please advise me.*

It is not uncommon for young adolescents to be restless in their sleep. Because of their rapid physical and mental growth, they live at high tension and are often highly strung. When people talk in their sleep they are "dreaming aloud," and the words they utter will usually disclose the subject uppermost in their thoughts. Sleep-talkers are nearly always impressionable people with excitable natures, and easily influenced by stronger minds. They are liable to be impressed by all sorts of suggestions. Your daughter is at the age when "big" subjects—as you style them—will occupy her thoughts to a great extent.

A girl's psychological development from childhood to womanhood is a very complicated process. Just now, sex consciousness is being forced upon her and is presenting her with many problems. If she has had no instruction from you, she may experience a sense of bewilderment, and may try in any case to square her own impressions with the facts—often highly coloured—she gleans from books. Dwelling deeply on these matters, and keeping her thoughts to herself, her brain remains active at night and her musings continue in her sleep.

You should take the first opportunity to have an intimate talk with her. Don't approach the subject directly, but watch your chance for an opening. If you feel unable to undertake this, give her a good book on these matters and discuss it together. You could ask the librarian to recommend one. If you can induce your daughter to speak about her problems, that will relieve the pressure on her mind and pave the way for more tranquil sleep.

### WHAT MAKES MY BOY TALK SEX THE WHOLE TIME?

*My boy talks sex. I hate to hear it; but ours is a free-speaking home, and we do not hide things in the ordinary way. But, though he talks of the subject from the student's viewpoint, I have the feeling that, in a lad of seventeen, such conversation*



*or exchange of ideas is somewhat out of place. Of course, I appreciate there are young people who are not "emotional" in this regard, but why should this son of mine be continually studying—for that is how he seems to treat the matter—sex and its intricacies? Do you think there is anything abnormal about him?*

It is certainly unusual for a youth to talk sex openly in the family circle, but one would hesitate to call your son's conduct abnormal. A great part of the thoughts of adolescents of both sexes is centred upon sexual matters. This is natural, for at this age sex is just developing and their minds cannot help dwelling upon such an absorbing theme. However, probably your boy is repressed in some way, and "blabs" sex to give vent to his feelings. At seventeen, he can only view sex from—as you state—a theoretical standpoint, and is not competent to form opinions of his own. It is evident that he wants to make an impression, and to be considered an adult. In a few years, when his emotional character has ripened and he falls in love, he will drop this annoying habit of analysing things, for then sex will have quite another meaning to him.

Meanwhile, why not try to compromise? Tell him that you are willing to discuss the subject with him, but that it must be at a suitable time and in privacy. If he objects to this, you should look for a deeper reason for his conduct. Is he trying to compensate for some fancied slight by purposely annoying you? Have you thrown cold water upon his efforts in some other direction? When a boy is stubborn and indifferent to the claims of others, it is usually because he thinks he has been unfairly treated in some way. There is certainly a motive for his conduct, and you would be wise to follow this line of inquiry.

### ARE MY GIRLS DEVELOPING A MAN COMPLEX?

*I am worried about my two girls. One is seventeen, and the other a year younger. They are film mad, and sit up half the night talking film gossip, and discussing the relative virtues of the men stars. Is this a normal state of mind for their age, or are they developing a man complex? They are healthy youngsters ordinarily, but I do not like this continued talk of films, film actors, and their good looks, etc. Should I take a hand in this matter, or would it be best to let it work itself out—if that desirable end is possible?*

You can help best by trying to understand your daughters' frame of mind, and why the films attract them so much. It is almost certain that their interest will "work itself out" to a great extent in course of time, when the real world has come to mean more to them than the world of imagination.

Young girls in their early teens often tend to be very romantic. Their vivid imaginations are fed by a continuous stream of new impressions which reach them from many sources. Much to which they were blind a few years earlier, begins now to take on a new meaning, and they are greedy for information and novelty of any sort. This hunger may be so great, that when the home surroundings are dull and prosaic, or their occupations uninteresting, they will fly to the cinema at every opportunity. They find it easy to identify themselves with the heroines of the screen, and can laugh or be miserable with them as the case may be. They will admire most those "stars" whose characters seem identical with, or supplement, their own. It is not so much a male these young girls see in their favourites, but a character who embodies the virtues which particularly appeal to them. It is, in fact, sex interest "at a distance" without the same fear of disillusionment as in ordinary life. This makes their "love" the more enduring. You will find that when your daughters fall genuinely in love with a youth of solid flesh and blood, these "shadow" interests, intense as they seem to be at present, may vanish almost overnight.

#### MY DOMESTIC HELP ENCOURAGES MY BOY. WHAT SHALL I DO?

*Though in an ordinary middle-class position, my husband's salary is sufficient for us to employ a daily help—a rather pretty girl of twenty-two. She has a way with her, and my three youngsters love her. The other, my first-born, a lad of sixteen, likes her too. Too much, in one respect, it would seem. Recently my help was turning out a bedroom when my boy went upstairs to get something he needed, and was away rather a long time. Going up later, imagine my surprise and embarrassment at seeing through an open door my son and the domestic clasped in each other's arms, kissing. I went downstairs quietly without them noticing me. I don't know what to do, really. The girl must be dismissed; but what of the boy? Please help me in this difficulty for, at the moment, I do not care to discuss it with my husband. He is of a rather hasty temper, and in view of this, I fear for the lad.*

Your son should be reasoned with rather than scolded. It is almost certain that your domestic help deserves to be saddled with the greater responsibility, and may, in fact, have been the real culprit in this affair. A woman of twenty-two is reasonably matured and answerable for her conduct, whilst the average boy of sixteen is still a child in many respects. Your domestic would know it was wrong to encourage this lad, and that she was abusing her position in your household. Young adolescent boys are very susceptible to flattery. They are anxious at all times to behave after the pattern of grown-ups.

But, at sixteen, unless somewhat precocious, they do not seek female company as a rule, but tend to avoid the opposite sex. Your son may be of an affectionate, demonstrative nature, and a wily woman would know how to play upon his feelings. His imagination also may have prompted him to imitate a favourite screen "star" in his amorous advances.

You should tell your boy your reason for dismissing the domestic—you can hardly avoid this under the circumstances—and endeavour to make him see that such an association could not make for his happiness, and, if discovered by others, might have unpleasant consequences. If your husband is wise he will follow your advice to have a friendly talk with the lad, who at his age is more sinned against than sinning.

### CAN "ART" PHOTOGRAPHS CONTAMINATE?

*I saw my boy giggling one day in the company of some of his friends, and happening to come up on them unobserved, discovered that they had a number of "art" photographs which they were handing round. I was very surprised at this for I had always thought my boy was a pure-minded lad. I gave them all a good talking to and sent them away ashamed. My son is only fifteen years of age, and I am still very worried over the matter. Do you think that there is any real danger of him being contaminated by pictures of this kind and by his companions?*

Unfortunately an even greater danger is likely to follow your own treatment of the boy, particularly in this case. Certainly the "art" photographs you speak of are pernicious and unpleasant, but it is very natural for boys to want to find out all they can about the human form. Possibly you have forgotten your own youth, for you must have been a very abnormal child if you were not curious yourself at that time.

The average boy is filled with a desire to find out all he can about the opposite sex, and, if he fails to find this out in a healthy and straightforward fashion, he will look around for other ways to satisfy his curiosity—among them by "art" photographs. If he had been given a proper instruction in sex from childhood up, he would find nothing to laugh at in the female form for it would all seem quite natural and right to him.

What you are doing now is to encourage secretiveness and to impress still further in his mind that sex is furtive and a "dirty business." Do not think from this that "art" photographs are to be condoned—what you should try and do now is to remove the furtive excitement that the pictures arouse. This is a difficult task and must be approached carefully. First, you must drop your own fears and try to discuss sex with him openly and frankly. Give him all the

healthy information you can; tell him that the publication of "art" photographs is a profit-making business battenning on people's stupid *ignorance*, and supplement this by telling him to read one or two good books. Then when he is beginning to know more and is in consequence adopting a "healthier" attitude, take him to some famous art gallery and show him the human form as painted by the world's masters. Point out once again that "art" photographs appeal only to the ignorant and immature, and you can be fairly sure, if only from vanity, that your problem will be solved once and for all.

### MY DAUGHTER CALLS ME A PRUDE. IS THIS SO?

*I regard myself as a broad-minded woman, and am no prude when it comes to the discussion of subjects many people would call "doubtful." Nevertheless, I detest the thought that young folk should defile their speech with "stories" of the near-the-line type. Imagine my feelings when I heard my own girl tell a "doubtful" to a boy friend in our own house. She did not retail this before me, but I happened to be in an adjoining room, and the door being open, I heard all that was said. I was ashamed for her, and myself, and speedily told her what I thought about it.*

*Now my girl, who is but seventeen, tells me that "there was nothing much in the yarn," and that I am an old-fashioned prude to be bothered about it. What do you think of this?*

Remember first of all, before you do anything, that almost every adolescent boy and girl uses some bad language and tells some "doubtful" stories on occasion. Growing consciousness of sex is very strong, the brain is excitable and expressions often escape without a thought as to their meaning. Indeed, very often the adolescent is completely ignorant of their real meaning, and tells them only because he or she has heard them elsewhere.

Adolescents often try to show their new found sense of independence by using strong words and telling "smutty" stories. It is a way of asserting their personality, and in a spirit of rivalry each tries to outdo the other—the stronger the word, the greater the shock they think they are giving their audience.

On the other hand, you are quite right to object to these unpleasant stories and to try and put a stop to them. The difficulty only arises when this has to be done without arousing your daughter's antagonism, turning her more deeply into herself, and possibly doing her some serious psychological harm. Primarily, you must bear in mind that a very probable cause is your daughter's lack of a sense of real self-confidence, and that the doubtful story was an attempt to raise herself both in her own estimation and in that of her boy friend.

Try then, and give your daughter some more confidence in herself, and after a time point out the stupidity of strong language and doubtful stories, telling her how much it betrays her age and lack of experience. Then point out how she would be surprised if someone—if possible, giving her a concrete instance—whom she particularly admires were to start telling a dirty story and say that this is a fairly good sample of the world's opinion.

People accept strong language and dirty stories but never really like to hear them from those they admire. After you have impressed this upon her—shown her that you are not so much shocked at her language as disappointed that she can only find such a futile way of impressing her personality—your daughter will be much less likely to call you a prude.

### MY GIRL HAS HAD A SHOCK. HOW CAN I MAKE HER FORGET?

*My daughter, who is just fifteen, returned from a walk one evening looking very pale and agitated. She refused supper, and went to bed pleading a headache. Two hours later I found her almost hysterical, but she would give me no explanation. For more than a week I had to sleep with her at nights when she would often wake up and clutch my arm in fright. Her nerves seemed in such a bad state that my husband agreed we must take her to our doctor. She was so alarmed at this idea that she confessed to me. A motorist had stopped her on a lonely bend in the road, dragged her into his car, kissed her several times against her will and threatened most awful things would happen if she breathed a word to anyone. There had been too long a delay for the police to trace her assailant, and now, after nearly six weeks, my daughter is still a bundle of nerves. The doctor has given her a tonic, but I should be very thankful to know what can be done to make her forget this unfortunate affair?*

Distressing occurrences of this sort are fairly common. Young girls are frequently accosted by blackguards, who molest them when they think there is little danger of detection. The difficulty is to get some of their victims to expose these despicable cowards, even when their identity is known, for the girl shuns the publicity it would entail, and prefers to keep silent and suffer. An adolescent girl is very finely balanced. A shock of this sort can have a serious repercussion on her nervous system. At this age she is most impressionable and fears are easily aroused. If your daughter had related her adventure to you straightaway, it would have eased her mind. Suppressing all the details, as she did, served to heighten her sense of injury and increase her terror.

You should do what you can to bring some new and novel interest



into her life, so providing her with a fresh store of happy memories to outbalance the unhappy. If you can afford it send her away for a holiday with cheerful people. Accompany her when she goes out after dark until her nerves are strong again. Let her mix freely with other boys and girls. One young girl who suffered a similar unhappy experience was greatly helped by taking part in amateur theatricals. Here she learned to express herself freely and to adapt herself to different characters and situations. It is likely you would find that some of these measures would help your girl to become normal again. And one must not forget that time is always the best and surest healer.

## CHAPTER 5

### HOME PROBLEMS

#### DISAGREEMENTS IN THE HOME

**T**HE adolescent's position in the family is not always an easy one. In some homes it resolves itself into a thinly-veiled struggle between parents and their children. Father and mother often fail to realize that their child is feeling his way towards a greater independence and should not be held back or discouraged in his efforts. On the other hand, growing boys and girls are apt to believe that their demands for freedom are refused for no other reason than the parents' desire to oppose them and enforce their own ideas of right and wrong, and here and there, indeed, we still find examples of the last-century type of parent who tries to rule his family with a rod of iron. Modern educationists, of course, are all opposed to this method, knowing that repressed children seek compensation in other directions and often in harmful excesses. The ideal is to give and take on both sides and where there is a readiness to do this, life runs smoothly. Opposition tends only to provoke opposition, and even makes it all the more difficult to reach any agreement.

It is now that the fruits of a child's early training will begin to show. Where discipline has been just, and the parents have managed to get their children's confidence, the adolescent will not need to press his claims or challenge every argument directed against him. On the other hand, where parents have been unable or unwilling to give the proper attention to the upbringing of the family, a youth may decide to take matters in his own hands and go his way without consulting either the wishes or the convenience of his elders. Peace is preserved here only on condition that the elders never interfere with his plans.

Another and even more urgent problem is the "pampered"

adolescent, for he is likely to give the most trouble of all. He thinks the home exists for him, and that the sole duty of his father or mother is to see he gets everything he wants and that quickly. He may easily, given the slightest encouragement, turn the house into a social club, bringing friends home at all hours, and demanding every form of service. On the other hand, and equally likely, he may want to live a solitary life, and have no desire for the company of boys of his own age. Boys of this type may even go so far as to show considerable resentment at their parents' visitors and make themselves thoroughly objectionable by retiring sulkily to their rooms.

It is unreasonable to expect, however, that, even in the best of homes, no possibilities for disagreement will arise. Wherever adolescents and adults come much into contact there are certain to be violently differing ideas of what is right and wrong. Mature men and women tend to have fixed ideas, while youth always wants to turn the world upside down and inside out, to try out new ideas and "debunk" all the fond beliefs cherished by their elders. Their blood is warm and flows quickly. They have no patience with "old-fashioned" methods, and always want to substitute ideas of their own—without, be it said, any great wish to be held responsible for the results.

### RIVALRY BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD

One of a parent's greatest problems is to accept a possible rival in the house in a growing son or daughter. Up to now the father or mother has decided the family policy, and children's voices have counted for little. Now, on the other hand, the adolescent may have very definite views about what should be done, and will never hesitate to lay down the law about it. If father chooses Blackpool for a family holiday, the boy may hold out for camping in the country. If mother wants to distemper the kitchen wall green, the daughter will say she cannot bear that colour and that yellow is much more suitable. These, of course, are trivial matters, but other and much more serious rifts may appear which cannot be so easily reconciled.

Furthermore, when there is disharmony between the parents this makes matters even worse, for then it is almost impossible for the older children not to take sides. The boy may openly support his mother's point of view, for example, and the girl suspect her mother is wrong and sympathize with her father in his trouble. She can often express her partiality so markedly as to become a rival in her mother's eyes, so paving the way for great unhappiness. In this case the parents' best plan to assure harmony in the house is to seek every means for agreement. In their young people's interest this is vital, for a quarrelsome atmosphere is poisonous and hampers normal development.

One of the greatest boons to an adolescent living in a small house is to have a room of his own, or the share of a room, where he can keep his belongings and be free from interruption from other members of the household. This not only enables him to retire for study or reading, or for concentration of any sort, but is also a most valuable counter-attraction to infinitely less profitable outside interests.

### NEED FOR A SENSE OF ORDER

Growing boys and girls who can be trained to take a pride in their tidiness, make better householders, when they marry, than those who have never had the chance of practising this virtue. Untidy wives and husbands usually come from homes where, for want of a special room, their possessions have been scattered all over the house, or where parents have set an untidy example to them.

At first glance, a sense of order may not seem the most important quality a youth should have, but if we look closely we can usually see some connection between neat habits and method in thinking and reasoning. The practice of leaving everything for mother to put away is a custom often condoned by an indulgent parent, but it reacts seriously upon the child's future partner in life. When a large employer of girls declared recently for a five-day week he overheard a curious objection from a number of them. "Oh, yes, that's all right in some ways, but we shall have to make our own beds on Saturday mornings!" This type, as wives, will present their husbands with some pretty problems later on, and if for this reason alone, no parent should encourage slackness of any sort in their children.

### POCKET-MONEY SHOULD BE FIXED

The reason why the position of the boy and girl in their early teens is often so precarious is that they are dependent upon their parents for the whole or the larger part of their keep. Only in rare cases do they earn enough to enable them to contribute to the family income, and even then they need money for clothes and amusements. Parents have a big hold on their children here, and the way they handle this problem is very important, for on it may depend the maintenance of a happy relationship. Some parents are inclined to be over-generous, and others to be mean. Both extremes are bad. It is necessary for youth to acquire a sense of values. Their general attitude to life may often be gauged by the way they handle their financial transactions.

The best plan is to fix upon a certain weekly sum for pocket-money, which should not be exceeded, except under special circumstances. Another amount should be set aside for the purchase of clothes. It is better to keep these accounts separately, for then there is less temptation to mix the money. Adolescents should have the privilege

of choosing their clothes. This gives them a feeling of responsibility, and is a mark of confidence which they appreciate.

Parents should be consulted in an advisory capacity but should interfere as little as possible. Errors in taste will sometimes occur, but this will be more than offset by the useful experience. Young people should know exactly what pocket-money is coming to them, and contrive to manage within this allowance. Borrowing should be forbidden. In no case should they be permitted to ask for credit or to run into debt. This must be emphasized, for it has an important bearing upon their financial dealings and character in later years.

### WHEN YOUR CHILDREN BRING HOME FRIENDS

The problem of friendships, and the right to bring friends to the house, is often a difficult one. Some homes keep practically open house and young people come and go at all times without comment. Other homes are entered only by permission and new-comers are subjected to the criticism of the rest of the family ! The majority of people are sociable and hospitable, and welcome visitors within reason, but in a home where one of the parents suffers from nerves, or is preoccupied with his own interests, a stranger will hardly be welcomed enthusiastically. The son or daughter who is not allowed to introduce friends or, at best, is given a grudging permission to do so, must not be blamed if his or her interests soon centre outside the home.

Probably the best solution is the following concrete example. In one small home a room was set apart on four evenings of the week for visitors, the right of use being shared in turns by the two adolescents of the family. The plan worked well, and many young people were entertained without any discomfort to other members of the household.

### SHOULD A BOY BRING HIS GIRL HOME?

But this concession to older boys and girls may give rise to a problem of a somewhat different nature. Perhaps a boy of seventeen or eighteen will want to invite a girl to his home. Parents often object to a proposal of this sort. Jealous mothers and unsympathetic fathers say their son is not old enough to be courting, and decide not to help him in any way. Such an attitude is a great mistake. By introducing the girl to his people the youth shows, in the first place, that everything is honest and above-board. He has nothing to hide, and only wants his people to form their own opinion of his choice. Wise parents should welcome this opportunity, for it enables them to assess the worth of a possible daughter-in-law and to give their son valuable advice. The same applies, of course, to a daughter who feels she would like her parents to meet a prospective husband.

Disputes often arise between parents and adolescent children about the question of staying out late at night. In the middle teens boys and girls do not want to be told to go to bed soon after the younger children. To stay up to a later hour is their privilege at this stage and a sign of being reckoned among the grown-ups. So long as the evening hours are spent at home all may be well, but when on returning from some party or amusement, they try to get in after locking-up time, trouble is almost certain to follow.

### A LATCH-KEY OR NOT?

How should this problem be met? The first thing to remember is that none of the household has the right to disturb others in the family who are asleep by coming in late. If there is any excuse for staying out a latch-key should be provided, and the user should let himself in as quietly as possible. Naturally, the agreed time of return will vary according to the age of the adolescent. In the late teens, under ordinary circumstances, no check should be put upon his movements. Parents should be prepared to make allowances for dances, concerts and special functions in the case of the younger people, but they may well forbid a boy or girl to roam abroad at an hour when there is risk of molestation by undesirable characters. The elders have a definite responsibility here and should enforce it. If a generous view is taken of the whole question the child will not wish to break the rules.

### THE SEARCH FOR EXCITEMENT

Adolescents from unhappy homes are glad to seize upon any opportunity promising an escape from monotony and offering a chance of excitement. Here, very likely, they never stop to question the quality of the pleasure. Romantically-minded boys and girls of good upbringing, for example, are often tempted to throw discretion to the wind and chase some more or less doubtful pleasure. Parents generally worry over this, for it seems far from innocent to them and it undoubtedly attracts their children. Perhaps they try to keep them away from a certain type of dance hall, refuse permission to let them join in outings where the company is mixed, and order them to decline offers of motor runs from comparative strangers.

The best way to tackle such problems is to take each one on its merits. One mother, who wished to know more of the dances her daughter frequented, got her husband to accompany her on several occasions. She did not find the revellers at all to her liking, but she made very little comment at the time. The next week she went again. She was spared the necessity of a third visit, for her daughter declared herself "sick of the whole show" and expressed her intention of keeping away for the future.

When dealing with questions of this sort friendly comment and advice secure much better results than strict orders and ultimatums.



Of course, there are times when a parent is obliged to make a stand against some particularly stupid escapade. He would be foolish and lacking in his duty if he failed to do so, but such occasions for drastic action will be rare if only the children are made to realize that orders are issued for their good and not for the parents' convenience or to emphasize their authority.

### HAVE PARENTS THE RIGHT TO OPEN LETTERS?

Adolescents usually, and quite rightly, resent any interference with their correspondence, but a suspicious parent is occasionally tempted to open or hold back certain letters arriving for their children, believing them to come from undesirable sources. Sometimes these letters are burned and no mention made of them. Such action is never warranted. If discovered it can only lead to quarrels and future deceit, for letters can easily be addressed elsewhere, or exchanged through a third party. At one time so many letters were sent to the Poste Restante department of post offices by minors that the officials were given special instructions for dealing with these.

Boys and girls determined upon corresponding with each other will always find a way to circumvent a parent who objects. Candour is the only safe policy here. Parents have an occasional right to enquire as to the nature of the contents of any suspicious letter sent to a young adolescent, but they should never exercise such rigid censorship that they arouse anger and resentment.

### MAKE-UP OR NO MAKE-UP

One of the most delicate problems that can arise between a mother and an adolescent daughter is the extent to which she should be allowed to use make-up. When mother sees her girl of fifteen posed for a long time before a mirror, applying powder and rouge to her face, she is apt to grow impatient and rebuke her for vanity and wasting time. It is certainly better for a girl to aim at acquiring a natural complexion. This should not be difficult. An hygienic mode of life, attention to diet, and plenty of exercise in the open air, will do more for looks than can be achieved by the use of any artificial aid. At the same time, if a girl with a pale or poor complexion is forbidden to use any make-up at all, she may feel inferior to other girls, and this could affect her by making her self-conscious. A wise mother, whilst encouraging a young daughter to be as "natural" as possible, should show her how "art should be used to conceal art," recommending that "make-up" should be used as sparingly as possible and never so heavily as to invite comment.

But there is another aspect to this problem. The adolescent girl who rouges her lips and powders her nose shows plainly that she wants to be considered grown-up. She is taking a positive attitude to life which is all to the good. Quite a number of young girls want

to remain children for some years after the middle teens. For one reason or another they are unwilling to adopt a more adult role, for the idea of womanhood, and all that it entails, is frightening to them. Some girls of fifteen, and over, are quite content to stop at home and dress dolls, whilst others of that age are already making friendly eyes at boys and exchanging sentimental little notes. Though she may cause a little anxiety, the latter type is more likely to embrace life with more courage than the ones who are still tied fast to their mothers.

### THE CINDERELLA OF THE FAMILY

In homes where there are several children, and the income is small, the mother may be obliged to go out to work. This means that her children cannot always receive the attention she would like to give them, and the problem of looking after them arises. This falls often to the lot of an elder girl who has just left school. It is her job to get her charges up in the morning, give them their meals, and pack them off to school, besides keeping the home clean and doing many other things throughout the day. She is, in fact, an unpaid housekeeper, with few of a housewife's privileges. This is an unfair position, for it saddles a young girl with the work and responsibilities of an adult, and ties her to the house at an age when she should be free to play, or amuse herself. If she is high-spirited, she may eventually rebel and refuse to continue. It must be remembered, however, that adolescents, and particularly girls, are very much at the mercy of adults and have little to say in any important matter. When a girl is forced to slave in this fashion, she may become easily discouraged and let things slide. The home gets dirty and neglected; her own person is uncared for.

### WHY CHILDREN SHOULD BE PAID FOR WORK

There are, also, two other dangers attached to this situation. The adolescent girl may be so dispirited with looking after children from morning till night that, in her secret mind, she determines to have no children of her own, and if marriage brings motherhood the children are unwelcome. In any case, the husband may not have too happy a time, for his wife, having been accustomed to ordering a little family about, and bossing it over them for years, will not be inclined to take orders or play second fiddle in the home. Parents who are obliged to leave a young daughter in charge of children should make every effort to compensate her in some way for her services. These should never be accepted as a matter of course. The girl should have as generous an allowance of pocket money as possible, and be free for certain hours every evening and some part of the week-end. Once or twice during the year she should be sent away for a little holiday to enjoy a thorough change from her usual round of work and duty.

## HOW TO HANDLE UNGRATEFUL CHILDREN

Parents who have made great sacrifices to give their children a good education often find them ungrateful and even antagonistic to their home surroundings. The parents may have denied themselves all sorts of luxuries to pay school fees, and of ordinary education themselves have rejoiced to see their child winning exam honours and bringing home prizes and scholarships. As a contrast to this the children themselves are often reluctant to introduce their parents to their schoolfriends and this hurts the parents deeply. This is a very sad problem and often inevitable. The fault, of course, lies with the kind of education. The mind has been trained carefully but often at the expense of practical and emotional experience. It is a difficult question for the parents; they love their child still but find a wall of selfishness and prejudice rise between them which separates them completely from any intimate contact.

Sometimes a sharp lesson will teach the child what he really owes his parents, but on the other hand, drastic action such as cutting off his pocket money may only antagonize him further. Probably a better idea is to get some respected friend to take him aside. Let him choose a suitable moment and then try to put the whole situation before him, showing him the sacrifices the parents have made and how he is completely dependent on them. He should point out how hurt they are and how selfish the youth is in putting up these barriers. A talk of this kind is very likely to make an ungrateful child realize the real situation.

## THE MOTHER'S DARLING

One of the greatest events in an adolescent's life is the day he or she leaves home for the first time, for it marks a severance of old ties and the beginning of a career of greater independence and responsibility. If the youth has had a sensible upbringing, and has not been coddled or spoiled, he will look forward to starting a separate existence and to the experiences it will bring. But there are cases where leaving home and all the old associations is frightening to timid minds, and makes them view the future with many misgivings. This fear may be shared by the parents; more frequently by a doting mother who, reluctant to let her child go, dreads the thought of parting. She believes no one else in the world is capable of ministering to his wants. Her attitude, if she realized it, is a selfish one, for it shows a desire to bind a young life to herself. Adolescents who write home complaining that circumstances are bad, their health suffering, and the people they meet unfriendly, have one desire uppermost in their minds—to get back to mother as quickly as possible and to an environment which they can master. They try many situations but find something wrong with them all. Such children are often afraid of love and marriage. If they do

wed, they will want mother to be within easy reach, so that they can fly to her with every fresh trouble. This is the type of adolescent who has never been allowed to grow up, and it is the parent who must bear a heavy responsibility for this most severe handicap.

### WARNING THE ADVENTUROUS

In an exactly opposite case is the adolescent itching to go out into the world to try his fortune. Perhaps, in a spirit of adventure or because of pressing conditions at home, he has run away already and been fetched back. The papers frequently tell of boys and girls who disappear for a time. When this happens, and no fault can be attached to home conditions, it is to be suspected that the youth is romantically minded, and believes he can make good as a soldier or sailor. Similarly, some girls believe they were born to be actresses, prima donnas, or fashionable mannequins.

This type of enterprising adolescent should not be crushed or ridiculed. As the parents have a wider knowledge of the world they should point out the snags and snares of these occupations, and endeavour to give their children some insight into the serious side of the business. When, despite their warnings, they see that the determination to pursue some ambition cannot be quenched, help and advice should be sought from someone closely in touch with the desired profession.

### THE TRAGEDY OF THE GIRL-MOTHER

Perhaps the saddest problem which a parent has to face is the case of a young daughter who is expecting an illegitimate child. Some parents immediately think that the whole family will be disgraced and treat the poor girl as a criminal; others try to hush the whole matter up as best they can, but whatever view is taken it is always a dreadful misfortune, of which the best has to be made.

The first step in such a crisis is to fix the responsibility upon the father and to see that he makes a proper contribution towards the upkeep of the child. This often troubles parents who are afraid of the publicity and scandal—but this is bound to break anyway, and it is obviously unfair that the girl should have to bear the burden alone. Parents, too, should always remember that, however foolish and reckless they may think their daughter, young adolescent girls are more often than not the hapless victim of an older and stronger mind—and even if this is not so, that circumstances are often stronger than the best of us.

In any case, the girl should be shown every consideration at this time, both for the sake of her health and that of the unborn child. It would be both cruelly unfair and dangerous to harass her at this stage and could result in nothing but the unhappiest results.

In cases where it is considered advisable for the child to be

orn away from home, the parents should ask their clergyman or doctor to recommend their daughter for admittance to one of the institutions dealing with cases of the kind. Here every care will be given, and the after-career of both girl and baby thought out. A generous-minded attitude should be adopted towards the young mother, so encouraging her to face life again and to take up her responsibilities with a good heart.

### WHEN A PARENT RE-MARRIES

The re-marriage of a parent with adolescent children always produces some ticklish problems. These are accentuated when the boys and girls remain on at home. Jealousies and disagreements are hard to avoid, and unless the greatest tact and forbearance are shown on both sides, any possible chance of harmony will soon be spoiled. There are step-parents who have a warm place in the affections of their partner's children, being treated by them with every consideration and mark of respect, but others are tactless and take up an uncompromising attitude, concerned chiefly in efforts to enforce their own will.

A parent who is thinking of re-marriage should discuss the project with his children. If they show signs of disapproval, they should be invited to consider his partnerless viewpoint, or to find work away from home, where interests are not likely to clash. It is unfair for all concerned to begin a new life under conditions which may easily result in difficulties at any time.

### FINDING OUTLETS FOR ENTHUSIASM

One of the most delightful qualities of a healthy adolescent is the enthusiasm with which he can throw himself into any job which appeals to him. If he is enlisted in some cause which fires his imagination he will give his last ounce of energy to try and achieve the end, and be ready to begin all over again on the morrow, but his lack of experience, however, will often land him in difficulties and he has still to learn judgment. Every "movement" appeals to him and some will try to rope him in as a support, to exploit him to their advantage. If there is any danger or it is a case where a notable public evil has to be attacked, the greater may be his efforts to be in the front of the fray. At this time there is usually some leader or hero—either national or local—he strives to copy, and whose word he obeys without demur. During these critical years parents should try to see their son has found a sound outlet for his social enthusiasms. Sometimes, however, this enthusiasm finds no outlet at all and this means trouble and resentment at home. All of us have known the vigorous young daughter who seems to run the house after business hours, hustling about and upsetting everybody. A girl like this can often find an outlet for her surplus energy as well as happiness and



contentment in some public work of a philanthropic nature. As a volunteer nurse, a helper in a charity fête, or an assistant in welfare societies, she can render excellent services. The great need is a chance to express herself more fully than can be done in the ordinary domestic or business atmosphere. Mothers should never deter their daughters from participating in anything which gives them an opportunity for constructive work.

Adolescent girls of forceful character, who find the home circumstances restricting, tend to become querulous and critical. Once their energies are directed to right channels conditions in the house become easier and happier, and a healthier atmosphere prevails.

### **“GIVING UP RELIGION”**

Many parents prize their church membership and are proud to have children attending a Sunday-school and singing in the choir. To them it is a real grief when an adolescent son or daughter expresses the intention of “giving up religion.” A fifteen-year-old boy, conscious of a break in his voice, may often throw up his singing because he has been teased about his quavering notes. It is a trifling matter, but since it hits him in a sensitive spot he may take this opportunity to leave the church completely. If home influence is not strong enough to make him attend services it is unlikely that religion will draw him again until he begins to think things out for himself. At this stage the parents are called upon to exercise both patience and tact. If they try to force his hand in any way by over-persuasion, an appeal to his feelings, or by veiled threats, they will probably increase his determination to go his own way.

Few keen-minded boys and girls in the teens do not ask questions about the basis of their religious faith. Facts which they accepted as children have now to pass the test of their reasoning powers. Their idealism is very strong at this age, but they are also inclined to be sceptical. They have to be approached very carefully and in the right spirit, but if a tactful person talks to them and shows them the spiritual background of organized religion, it may affect them profoundly for the rest of their life.

### **DIFFICULTIES ABOUT CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

It occasionally happens in a family that one parent is a warm supporter and regular attender at church, whilst the other, if not actually antagonistic, never enters a place of worship. When the adolescent has a special desire to please either father or mother he may be faced by this problem of church-going. If the father looks upon this observance with indifference, the son, who up to now has accompanied his mother on Sundays, may begin to think it more manly to go out walking with him. An unwise mother may here find an opportunity to make trouble, for if she rebukes her boy he

may appeal to his father for support. One way out of this delicate situation is for the mother to suggest that the boy shares his father's company in the morning, and goes to church with her in the evening, or vice versa.

If both father and mother are intent upon avoiding disputes, neither of them will use arguments to swing the boy over to their side. They, or more competent counsellors, can advise him on any point where he asks for guidance, and then leave him to make his own decision. In that case, whichever course he adopts, he will retain his respect for the sincerity of his parents' views.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### MY DAUGHTER IS DISSATISFIED. WHAT CAN I DO?

*I am a widower and am troubled about my sixteen-year-old daughter. My elder daughter took over the housekeeping after my wife's death and runs things splendidly. The younger girl won a scholarship, and I undertook to keep her at school until she was sixteen. As a small child she was very frank and open and always confided in me. Now she has become obstinate and secretive, and seems to be drifting away from us. The other day I asked her point-blank why she was acting in such a strange way. The reply was to the effect that she was tired of home, because she refused to be bossed by her elder sister. What should be my action to put matters on a happier basis in my home?*

It is fairly easy to see that jealousy is at the root of your younger daughter's trouble. Unfortunately this is a very difficult problem to deal with, and, short of a sudden change of character, any peace that can be patched up will stand little chance of lasting. The position is obvious. The elder girl is very efficient with her work and has become almost indispensable. This gives her a big "pull" in the house. The younger girl is quite dependent upon you, and can make no claim for services rendered. If, as is likely, she has heard her sister praised by you and by friends she may feel left out of it and a useless dependent in the family. This point of view may seem foolish to you, but one must not forget that an adolescent of sixteen wants power both over people and things, and, if frustrated, will become very unfriendly. Your younger daughter realizes that she ranks second in the home, believes that she counts for little when weighed against her sister; and that is her grievance.

There are two courses open to you. You could make an impartial investigation of the younger girl's complaints. If the elder daughter agreed, adjustments could be made here and there. Her sister could be entrusted with some part of the responsibilities of the home, and made to feel that she counted. Frankly, however, this would not

succeed without the willing co-operation of all concerned. It might be a case of adding to one and detracting from the other, and the outcome then would be doubtful. The second plan is more drastic and for that reason to be recommended. You could find a new home—either temporary or permanent—for your younger daughter with relatives, or secure her a situation with responsible people. In a fresh environment, and with greater independence in some ways, she might see life differently. Naturally, she would have to agree to this scheme. If present conditions continue serious difficulties may arise and it is very possible that her character may deteriorate.

### HOW CAN I GET MY BOY OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING?

*How can I make my boy get up in the morning? He has already lost two good jobs because of arriving late at his work. I gave him an alarm clock, but after the first week it had no effect, for he slept through just as if it had not been in the room. Please tell me the best thing to do about it.*

Growing boys and girls need a lot of sleep, and must have it if they are to keep fit. Everybody knows the pull of the bed, especially on a cold morning, but it is bad training to get into the habit of jumping out at the last minute, and beginning the day with a rush. People are sometimes reluctant to get up because they go to bed too late at night. Others are below par in health, and have little vitality or they are of a lazy nature. Another reason is their daily lives are so empty and uninteresting that no incentive exists to be up and doing. See, in the first place, that your boy retires early. Find out if he likes his job, and if not, try to place him where the work will be more to his taste. If he is in good health, and there is no excuse for over-sleeping, tell him plainly you do not intend to let him be idle, and that it is his duty to contribute to his keep. What this lad may possibly need is a sense of his responsibilities, and the sooner you let him know exactly where he stands the better for his future career.

### SHOULD I ALLOW MY DAUGHTER TO BE ORDERED ABOUT CONTINUALLY BY MY WIFE?

*My wife continually tells my daughter, a girl of fifteen, that she mustn't do this, or that, because it is not "lady-like." I do not like to interfere since family squabbles are abhorrent to me, but I feel that the girl is being repressed far too much, and dread the possible effect on her. Disloyal though it may appear, I am afraid my wife has somewhat of a "climber" complex, and studies too much what people will think. Please advise me on this matter. I want to keep the peace, obviously, but I do not want my girl to suffer so much of the "iron hand."*

Your wife might be surprised to learn that she is suffering from a subtle form of inferiority complex. This explains her desire to be

considered "in the swim" and to keep abreast of other people. She is afraid, for example, that anything touching her or her family should fall below a certain arbitrary standard. In her anxiety to create a favourable impression, she seems intent upon curtailing her daughter's freedom and bending her to her own pattern. The problem for you is whether to keep the peace or to compel your partner to allow the girl a life of her own. Put plainly, it amounts to your wife's pride—and selfishness—versus your child's normal and happy development.

If your daughter possesses the initiative and will-power of the ordinary adolescent she will, sooner or later, kick against these pettifogging restrictions and deliver an ultimatum to her mother. Then it may well be a battle of opposing wills, the result of which must affect you in some way. You are responsible in part for your daughter's welfare, and it would show weakness to renounce your rights, for in the event of your girl "breaking out" later on in an undesirable direction you could not be wholly absolved from blame.

#### BOUGHT MY BOY TO STAY BY MY SIDE?

*"I'm going, whatever you say!" That's what my boy says to me, whenever I suggest that he should stay at home, instead of running off to the pictures or some other place of amusement. The defiance in his attitude hurts me. As a widow I fear for the future. My boy is sixteen years of age, and has been at work for a twelvemonth. Most of his pocket money is spent on amusement, and I am left frequently alone. What shall I do in regard to this position of affairs? I want more of my boy's company, and I have hitherto viewed the future with him always by my side.*

It is possible you have not realized, or else are unwilling to face, the fact that you and your boy belong to different generations. You cannot expect him to find the same satisfaction in your company as he enjoys among boys of his own age. Your interests and his, in a great number of things, cannot be the same. When you try to bind him to a mode of life which fits your ideas you are holding him back from developing on his own lines. Adolescents of sixteen, possessed of spirit and initiative, always want to branch out and experiment. Anything which shows life as lived in the raw, or under exciting conditions, has an irresistible appeal for them. Hence your boy's love of the pictures and other lively forms of entertainment.

Make up your mind to let your son go his own way and do not try to hold him "always by your side." You may find it often more stimulating to enter into *his* interests and ambitions for the future. Get him to talk these over with you and to discuss any other subject he has near at heart. If he finds he can speak without restraint you will get more of his confidences—and company maybe—than



you will in any other way. Any "possessiveness" must be abandoned where he is concerned, for in a few years time another woman may occupy the first place in his affections. By preparing for this eventuality now, you may be spared much unhappiness later.

### IS IT RIGHT FOR A MOTHER TO CENSOR HER SON'S READING?

*When tidying my boy's room the other day, I discovered a packet of leaflets advertising books which I thought were quite unfit for him to read. My first impulse was to show them to his father, but on second thoughts I put them on the fire, and told my son of what I had done. I was shocked at the way he turned on me, addressing me in a manner he had never attempted before. I should never have thought my boy capable of this behaviour. Do you believe thinking about these books has turned his head and made him a little strange? And would it be better to tell his father about it now?*

You would be acting unwisely in informing your husband before you tried first to set the matter right with your son. To begin with, you were trespassing upon his private property when you destroyed the papers. By showing your authority in this way you asserted your claim to decide what he should and should not read. At this period of his life, although you certainly have the right to advise you cannot lay down the law in this drastic fashion, and it would be surprising if he did not resent your action. It is a pity the lad addressed you impolitely, but you have only yourself to blame. You must remember that adolescent boys have to pass through a very difficult period, when they are harassed often by all sorts of fears. When there is no one to turn to for advice—and many boys are far too shy to dream of asking—they are inclined to snatch at any literature which seems likely to throw light on their problems. Their first thought is to keep this a dead secret. When your son discovered he had been found out, his anger was intensified by his sense of shame, and he lost control of himself. Your best course is to tell him you are sorry. If you can get your husband to speak to him, it might help, but in any case, you should wait some time before the subject is broached again, and then it must be at a fitting moment, and with the exercise of a good deal of tact.

### AM I OLD-FASHIONED TO OPPOSE MY SON'S BETTING?

*A sporting neighbour was talking recently in the hearing of my boy, now nearing his seventeenth birthday, when he mentioned that a certain horse stood a good chance in the Derby. My son, to my surprise, remarked that it had certainly shown good form in a recent race and, in his opinion, represented a reasonably good bet for the big event. I was dumbfounded. I had*



*no idea he knew anything about horses and their form. I said nothing then, however, but tackled the lad later, when he was belligerent. He suggested that I was old-fashioned, and that he and the fellows at his office often discussed these things and made various bets. I told him I didn't like racing and that I'd be pleased if he would drop all interest in it. I could get no promise from him. Am I old-fashioned, and is there not a danger in a youngster of his age getting to the stage of backing horses? Tell me, please, what you think about this.*

You are not old-fashioned in showing concern for the welfare of your son, for you have a perfect right to tell him exactly what you think about betting and of your fears for his future. But you are certainly old-fashioned if you retain the belief that a boy of his age can be compelled to give up all interest, and forget all about it, at a word of command from you. If your powers of persuasion fail, and you begin to use threats, you will only increase his spirit of rebellion and drive him to pursue his hobby in secret. So long as he does not exceed his allowance of pocket-money, or ask you to pay his debts, you can make no complaint on that score. Adolescents love to experiment. Anything with a spice of excitement in it makes an irresistible appeal, and you should not try to curb his adventurous nature but seek rather to guide it into profitable channels.

There is this danger. If your son finds "easy money" coming to him through his betting, he may be inclined to think hard work in an office not worth the trouble. The lure of freedom without struggle is always tempting, and an initial run of "luck" on the course might tend to sap his efforts and eventually spoil his career. It is likely this risk is remote, and that he simply regards his "bob on" now and again as a fascinating diversion. Discuss the whole thing with him without attempting to force your will or opinions. Point out that the odds are heavily against the backer, and then leave the matter to his discretion.

### **SHOULD MY HUSBAND GIVE MY DAUGHTER MONEY BEHIND MY BACK?**

*My oldest girl is fifteen, and has been having two-and-six a week pocket money. Now she has asked us to give her a trifle more. I am not willing to do this for I think she spends it foolishly. Her father, however, says he will not have her appear mean in the company of other girls, and gives her cash behind my back. Do you think I am justified in being angry, and ought I to try to put a stop to this?*

It might be well to ask yourself your *real* reason for objecting to your daughter having more money. Perhaps you would have to confess there was more than a touch of jealousy about it. Certainly

the fact of your husband giving behind your back would only increase that feeling. You should try to remember that your girl is now growing into a woman, and that you have no right to treat her as if she were still a child. She is out for more freedom, and that is a very healthy sign. To win some part of that freedom she must have money. If you force your husband to take sides you will soon be looking upon your daughter as your rival, and that is no way to keep the home peaceful and quiet. You must be prepared to let the girl grow up, and even help her to do so. This will not always be easy, but it will pay you much better than watching her every step and trying to hold her back. If you agree to her receiving what your husband thinks is a reasonable amount of pocket-money, that will stop the necessity for deceit. Try to win back any part of your daughter's confidence you may have lost, so that she may feel she can bring her problems to you for discussion.

### HOW CAN I PREVENT MY DAUGHTER FROM BEING UNDULY INFLUENCED?

*My daughter is very fond of a school friend, and visits her several times a week. This friend's mother is a strong character, and rules the life of everyone in her household. I am afraid she is also beginning to have an influence over my girl, for she is developing ideas which she never held before, and these do not always fit in with our own notions. I have tried to get her to keep away from this house, with the result that she has been there without letting us know. Her father proposes forbidding her to go altogether, but I can foresee trouble if he tries to carry this out. How should I meet this problem?*

It is evident that this woman has some considerable influence over your daughter; presumably a case of a strong personality impressing a weaker. Before you interfere, however, you should first examine yourself to see if you are jealous at heart, and perhaps unwilling to share your daughter, and also find out if the new ideas she brings home are unacceptable to you and your husband, not so much because they cut across your own, but because they come from this particular quarter. Prejudices, backed by a streak of jealousy, can blind us to the truth of any argument. Your best plan is to invite the mother to visit you, or to accompany your girl to her house at times. Try to keep your mind as open as possible, and endeavour to see the other's point of view. Then, instead of getting angry, talk the subjects over with your daughter calmly, telling her your reasons for holding different opinions. You may be able to persuade her eventually of the truth of your remarks, but you will never get her to agree with you by merely ridiculing her ideas or by threatening her in any way. That will only serve to drive her into the opposite camp.

**MY BOY EXAGGERATES. HOW CAN I STOP THIS?**

*I have a son of fifteen who makes me look silly before other people. For example, a friend congratulated me recently upon my luck in the pools, and intimated that he could do with a few pounds. When I asked him what he meant, he winked and called me a sly dog. Upon pressing him further, I learned that my boy had informed him of my winning "a big sum" in a competition. As a matter of fact I had just received a P.O. for 2s. 6d. for a crossword prize entry. My son also brags about our wonderful radio set—a cheap second-hand one—and of his rich uncles in America—who don't exist. I hate to think that my son is a worthless braggart. Can you explain his conduct and say how to stop this foolishness?*

"Looking big" is a typical adolescent attitude. Anything which would detract from the picture your son holds of himself and his family he would be likely to shun, whilst everything which contributed to it would be valued. Within reason, there is nothing unnatural about this. A youth who has no desire to assert himself and make an impression is lacking in spirit and is unlikely to be enthusiastic about anything. But your son, evidently, does not hesitate at stretching the truth when he wants to create an effect among his friends.

Allowance might be made for this in the case of a child, but when a boy of his age "romances" it shows a weakness of character. At heart he is afraid that if his story does not cap all others he will be thought inferior.

You should point out that such conduct will earn him a reputation for lying and untrustworthiness, will also reflect upon his bringing up and that any fool can win easy triumphs of this sort. If the boy is fairly expert at any job, encourage him to put his best work into this.

Set him a certain—fairly high—standard to achieve and endeavour to secure his promise not to speak about the matter until the mark has been reached. This method has been tried with success by parents and teachers who have had to treat boys with a pronounced "bump of exaggeration."

**IS MY GIRL'S EMPLOYER WELL-INTENTIONED?**

*Please tell me what to do in the circumstances here explained. My daughter—she is sixteen—has a position with a firm of local estate agents, and, in the ordinary way, comes home to lunch. Lately, however, she has suggested she would prefer to take a snack with her, as the ten-minute journey from and to the office upsets her work and makes her tired. But a whisper has reached me that she lunches most days with the junior partner, a young man of perhaps twenty-eight, and though the*

*matter may have no significance, I am hurt because my girl's excuse was obviously a lie. What attitude should I take up, and do you think there is any danger in the association of these two?*

This is a situation which should be cleared up without loss of time. Your girl lied to you for one of two reasons—she was afraid you would not agree to her lunching regularly with her employer unless you knew the exact circumstances, or she has been acting under his instructions. If everything had been above-board it is difficult to see her reason for not confiding in you in the first place. It is true that girls of her age do not always speak openly of these things to their parents, even when they go to them about other matters. She may want to create a romantic situation out of an affair of business routine and so endeavoured to throw a veil of mystery over it. On the other hand, her employer—almost double her age—would be acting unwisely and inviting comment, by encouraging her to lunch with him frequently, apart from office urgencies. You should see the junior partner and explain the position. By using tact you need not expose your girl, but can hear what he has to say. If you are convinced that he is upright and dependable, all may be well. But if you have reason to suspect his motives, remove your daughter immediately. In any case, it is clearly your duty to find out how matters stand. Girls of your daughter's age are very susceptible to the flattery and attentions of people of superior position. Make allowances for this if you feel she is deserving of blame.

### SHOULD PEN FRIENDSHIPS BE ALLOWED ?

*What do you think of pen friendships? My daughter has been introduced, through a club, to a pen friend in France, and so far the letters received from the French girl are quite nice in every way. But I have been studying them recently, and, here and there, have noted remarks which might conceivably indicate that the writer is a woman and not a girl. There is nothing undesirable whatever in these letters, but I have heard so much of the clever and cunning ways certain types of foreigners have of insinuating themselves in the minds of girls, that I am somewhat in doubt as to whether this correspondence should be allowed to go on. Perhaps you will kindly give me your views on this matter.*

There are several reputable agencies in this country for putting correspondents in touch with foreigners. One of their expressed aims is to promote international goodwill. Often an interchange of visits results from the pen friendships thus formed. In so far as this correspondence furthers the exchange of views of general interest—

for example, young people tell of their families, schools, occupations and excursions—they serve an excellent purpose and can be very educative. The idea is to link up correspondents of about the same age and standard of living.

If your daughter was introduced through a reliable source you have little to fear. It is usual for correspondents to exchange photographs at an early stage; if this has not yet been done, you might request this favour. Then, unless her correspondent is intending to deceive, you will be able to form a pretty good estimate of her age. In any case, you will do well to supervise the letters both ways. In the event of your daughter wishing to accept an invitation to visit France, you should first take up references—through the club or privately—which would leave no doubt as to the absolute trustworthiness of her prospective hosts.

### CAN THE AGED AND ADOLESCENTS LIVE TOGETHER?

*I am facing a difficult problem, and one which may affect the welfare of my two children. My husband wants his aged and infirm father to live with us in our small house. The father is suffering from an illness which makes him exceedingly irritable and unable to get about far. I should not mind looking after him if I had no family, because in the past he has been good to us, but with a very highly-strung girl of fifteen, and a boisterous lad of a year older, I foresee difficulties ahead. My husband is usually very considerate, but he seems bent upon having his way this time. What do you think about it?*

It is only natural for your husband to wish to help his father, but clearly he has not given thought to what the presence of an invalid in a small home would mean to the young people. Normal youths have a dread of illness, and have little patience with old age or any kind of infirmity. It is not so much indifference or hardness of heart on their part, but all their inclinations turn to that side of life which shows brightness, lightness and physical vitality. So long as the sick man's presence did not intrude too much upon them, all might be well for a time. But crabbed old age and adolescence cannot live together for long, especially in circumstances which would throw them continually into each other's company. The result might be that your daughter's nerves would suffer, and your son begin to shun the home for some place more cheerful. Try to make your husband see this side of things. If he persists, get him to promise that his father's stay shall terminate should the children's welfare be seriously affected.



## CHAPTER 6

## SCHOOL LIFE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

## HOW TO SUPPORT A SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

**E**ACH year thousands of elementary schoolchildren qualify for "free" places in secondary schools. Here, as far as education is concerned, they are on an equal footing with fee-paying pupils; but many parents unfortunately are unable to let their children take advantage of the educational opportunities they have won.

Although to poor parents there are no fees to pay, special school clothes must be bought and many other incidental expenses crop up from time to time, such as club subscriptions, games fees, and the like. Furthermore, there is always the difficult problem of maintaining a child until he is sixteen or seventeen, without any such contribution to the family exchequer as the wage-earner can bring. Just at this time, too, the healthy adolescent needs more food to maintain him than ever before, begins "to eat his head off" and the household bills leap up.

There are a number of schemes of one kind or another which enable a parent to meet an emergency like this. Most of them involve the payment of a few pence a week—a sum most parents can afford—from the time the child is born. Then when he reaches the age of eleven or twelve, the parents receive an annual grant for five years which helps to cover the extra cost of secondary education.

## SCHOOL OR WORK ?

Before a parent decides, however, to enter his child for a free place examination at a secondary school, he should consult the head teacher, who will be able and glad to tell him the particular rules and regulations of the Local Education Authority. One of the troubles about the present system is that it varies so much from district to district that it is almost impossible to give any general advice, and only a person who knows the local conditions thoroughly can help.

This is brought out clearly in a remark by one of London's chief Inspectors for Education, "The plans for examination areas are as varied as the authorities who conduct them. Each Local Education Authority has evolved its own system, and changed or modified that system from time to time. The varieties of types are bewildering."

Another trouble is that the expression "free place" is inaccurate as far as many parents are concerned. Parents are asked to state their incomes and, notwithstanding their success in the examination,

children of comfortably off parents are not always given a free place. If the authority thinks the parents can afford it, they will be asked to contribute something towards the school fees.

On the other hand, most—if not all—authorities give special grants to scholars who are destined for the teaching profession and some authorities extend this to other professions. It is to be hoped that before long something approaching a national system will be evolved from the chaos and that grants will be more uniform throughout the country.

“Means” tests, too, vary considerably in standard and rigidity from place to place, but taking an average it may be said that when a child from a really poor family wins a free place, an annual maintenance grant of approximately £10 is given for a period of five or six years, and when the pupil lives some miles away from the school, Local Education Authorities very often give a grant for travelling expenses.

Practically all secondary schools serve a nourishing and substantial midday meal which can be taken by any pupil whose parents pay a small fee—always under a shilling—per day, and in some parts of the country, particularly in the industrial north, both local authorities and private donors have given money to provide meals for poorer children.

### WEIGHING THE ADVANTAGES

The scholarship examination is held at either ten or eleven years of age, so that parents will not be out of pocket for at least four years. After that time, the difference in the family income will be the difference between the value of the grant and the amount the child could earn in a job. This is obviously impossible to estimate with any accuracy, but provided that the child is really promising, the immediate difference should not be great. Secondary school-children, too, can compete for further scholarships, and one with real academic brilliance can sometimes make more this way than by any wage he could earn.

It is difficult, too, to estimate at all accurately what wage an adolescent boy would be likely to command. In some parts of the country—more particularly in Lancashire and the West Riding—textile manufacturers tempt a large proportion of school-leaving children by offering immediate wages of as much as fifteen shillings a week, increasing quickly up to thirty shillings when they are fully proficient. Girls, too, can often earn as much as this in domestic service, if the value of their keep is counted; but in country districts the demand for labour is much smaller and a good adolescent is lucky if he or she can earn fourteen to eighteen shillings a week. At the moment, too, there is practically no juvenile unemployment, and every child of school-leaving age is likely to get a job—of sorts.

There is one great snag, however, about juvenile employment that should be stated here. Attractive though these jobs may seem immediately, an enormous proportion of them are ultimately "blind alleys." Boys and girls are comparatively cheap labour, and in mass-production industry they can be quite as efficient as any adult. Many employers then, tend to employ juveniles, throw out their adult employees and expel the juveniles as well as soon as they demand an adult wage. This applies equally strongly, too, to such occupations as messenger boys and so on.

### **"BLIND ALLEY" EMPLOYMENT**

Within recent years there has been a determined effort to combat the dangers of blind alley employment. Formerly, one of the attractions of juvenile labour was that it was uninsurable; employers did not need to contribute to Health and Unemployment Insurance, but since September, 1934, all employees from school-leaving age have been compulsorily insurable for unemployment, and this is now being extended to health insurance. Furthermore, Head Teachers' Committees have been formed in the elementary schools to try and guide children into jobs with some real future, and these have co-operated with both local and national authorities in training schemes and the like. One result of all this activity has been, however, to force up wages in the blind alley occupations and make them seem even more attractive than before. The Ministry of Labour has started a scheme to transfer the employed from blind alley occupations to more profitable jobs, but this has only applied to the special areas and, of course, only touches the fringes of the problem. This problem of blind alley occupations is very pressing and must be seriously thought of in considering the question of whether a boy or girl be kept on at school or go to work. His initial high wages will be small consolation if a boy finds himself, when he reaches the age of seventeen, out of work and trained to no trade, fit only to be a messenger or a casual labourer.

### **ADVANTAGES OF TECHNICAL TRAINING**

On the other hand, a boy or girl who attends a secondary school can often secure a post in the civil service, banking, insurance, railway companies, etc., with a commencing salary of £50 to £70 a year and the prospect of regular annual increments. Really talented boys and girls, too, have the chance of competing for special service positions in the Air Force and so on, or of winning scholarships to a university, for example—an education which opens up for them any job in the country.

Besides secondary education in a limited sense, there are central schools with a distinctly technical twist, trade schools, special training centres, and so on—all of which entail continuation of



*The years between thirteen and twenty are extremely critical from the point of view of health. All young people should be encouraged to keep a regular routine, to play games and generally to keep physically fit. Tennis is excellent, as it encourages frank and friendly mixing of the sexes.*

training for some time after elementary school-leaving age. All of these systems open up far better chances of ultimate success in life.

There is one other important fact which should not be overlooked. Boys and girls who are enabled to continue their education until they are seventeen are assured of a regular routine, long holidays, plenty of exercise and games, and congenial surroundings. All these are very important factors towards the building up of strong healthy bodies and minds, just at the very age when Nature makes her biggest demands. Many secondary schools and most authorities make real efforts to raise the physique of under-nourished and physically backward children, and the care that their health receives at this time is invaluable.

The parents of limited resources with talented children have always a difficult problem in deciding whether to keep their children on at school, whether to give them a technical training, or to take the advantage of an immediate salary. It is always difficult to have your cake and eat it, but a readiness to forgo the immediate advantages might well be amply rewarded before many years have passed.

As a general conclusion, therefore, we may say that if your boy or girl is clever enough to benefit by the enormous advantages that secondary school or technical education can give, every effort and every possible sacrifice should be made in order that he or she can enjoy it. The parents who make these efforts and sacrifices may be reasonably certain that in the long run the reward, both material and mental, will far outweigh them.

### SNOBBERY IN SCHOOL

Another problem which parents and schoolchildren often have to meet is the spirit of snobbery which exists in a few secondary schools. Free-place children, especially those who are known to come from poor surroundings, are occasionally apt to be looked down upon by others more fortunately situated than themselves. Their accent and manners are ridiculed, and in a few cases, the newcomers, if of a sensitive nature, can be made thoroughly miserable. Parents who wonder why a child does not seem to be making good progress in an advanced school should remember that his psychological reactions to taunts and sneers may seriously affect studies for the time. For the most part, these are isolated cases, but they must be taken into account. It is mainly a question of the boy finding his feet in class and on the playing-field, where good work will quickly earn the respect of schoolfellows. The danger does exist, however, that a timid child may shrink from the jeers of his tormentors and begin to believe that he is really inferior in some way and be unwilling to take a full share in the school life.

One parent, who suspected that his boy of fourteen was suffering in this way, cultivated the friendship of a neighbour's sons, hefty



ads of fifteen and sixteen, who attended the same secondary school. He allowed them to help sail an old boat he owned on the creek. His own son was an expert at this and his skill was openly admired by his companions. Three summer months spent in this company brought him out so wonderfully that he was able to face the autumn term full of confidence.

### PROBLEM OF CO-EDUCATION

Should adolescent boys and girls be educated together? This is a problem for every parent who is interested in character development and building. Where the number of secondary pupils is comparatively small, there is no alternative choice; but many fathers declare that co-education makes boys soft and effeminate, and mothers often deplore the rough tomboy habits that their daughters acquire. Probably, the truth of the matter is that almost everything depends upon the type of boy and girl and the personality of the teacher. When the sexes mingle freely at work and play they get to know and appreciate each other's qualities. The sense of distance which can be a severe handicap in the later teens and early adult years, preventing them from making easy friendships, is lost, and a spirit of comradeship is fostered. The mild element of sex rivalry in class leads many pupils to do good work, and may stimulate even the natural slackers to amazing successes. Against this it has been said that the familiarity arising out of co-education is likely, as elsewhere, to breed contempt. Boys lose their sense of courtesy, treating girls exactly as they do members of their own sex. While girls drop their finer feminine traits, become untidy in person and uncouth in manners. The "mystery of the sexes," the usual powerful incentive drawing men and women together in the early adult years, is dispelled and a matter-of-factness, fatal to romance, takes its place. Some parents uphold one view and some the other.

### SEXUAL ASPECTS OF CO-EDUCATION

All, however, are in agreement about the urgency of a further problem of co-education. "What will be the effect, if any, upon any child's sexual development?" they ask. It is impossible to give any answer to this question that will include every kind of pupil. In every school there are some boys and girls who have been brought up to observe a code of honour and who are thus naturally clean-minded, and there are always others who have never been set any standard of moral behaviour. Allowances, too, must always be made for those young people who mature at an exceptionally early age and already possess the sentiments and feelings of adults.

There is, however, one natural and important safeguard to be noted. Although impulse is often strong at this age, and the power of self-control seldom fully developed, exceedingly powerful

inhibitions are at work, and these are nearly always enough to hold temptation in check. Furthermore, there is one other helpful factor. In co-educational schools the group spirit is many times stronger than individual preference, and the boy or girl who went his or her way in defiance of this would at once run counter to popular opinion. Very few adolescents can bear the thought of this, so that as soon as parents are satisfied that a co-educational school is under the leadership of a capable head there is little need for them to worry about the moral or physical well-being of their children.

### ADOLESCENT "CRUSHES"

The importance of the teacher in the training of an adolescent can hardly be over-estimated. He or she may not make or mar the pupil, but can do an enormous amount to give a young and impressionable mind a trend in certain directions. "Our master (or mistress) knows a jolly sight more about it than you do!" may not strike a parent as a flattering comparison, but it can give him some idea of the influence the school is exerting on his children. The love of the normal adolescent contains a large element of reverence and admiration. The world has not yet disillusioned and disappointed him, and hope and faith are retained in a hundred beautiful things. Fine poetry, inspiring biographies, stories of high romance and adventure grip his imagination. He has a score of heroes; he feels he would be willing to defend any one of them with his life. The glamour of these years colours all his actions and it would be strange if some person in the environment—usually much older than himself—made no appeal to him for some particular reason. What he is looking for is someone upon whom he can centre the wealth of his affection and his adoration.

This is where the problem of an adolescent's feeling for a certain teacher or adult may easily arise. "My girl is crazed about her drawing mistress," a mother will complain. "It is Miss-this and Miss-that all day long. Her head seems to be full of nothing else."

### WHEN THEY BECOME A DANGER

There is nothing abnormal about this relationship. Many young girls have these "crushes" on teachers, school comrades or older members of their own sex. They provide an emotional outlet and, as a rule, need not give rise to anxiety. It is only when they last after a girl is seventeen or eighteen that they may become dangerous and the persistence of such an attachment after that age generally shows that the girl's emotional life is not developing properly. By this time her interests should be centred on the opposite sex, and in such a case it is wise to give her every opportunity of meeting suitable and attractive young men and encourage her to join in dances and social functions where she is likely to meet them.

### EXCUSE-MONGERS

If we watch any fairly large group of adolescents carefully it is usually easy to spot a member whose peculiar conduct marks him out from the rest. In school he may be the boy who is always seeking to excuse himself. In his own opinion he is never at fault, but always the unfortunate victim of circumstances. Even before any accusation is directed against him, he may try to protect himself and to throw the blame on somebody else. When he gets low marks it is because he has mistaken the question, or a boy has stolen his exercises, or the teacher has a spite against him. A girl may declare that her desk is badly lighted, that mother thinks the subject is stupid, or that she could not possibly prepare her homework because there was illness in the house, or visitors had arrived unexpectedly. The attitude of both boy and girl is always one of "*It isn't fair!*" This stock expression is constantly produced at the least provocation, and he cannot make any bargain without thinking that he has been cheated if the slightest thing goes wrong. This type of adolescent cannot bear the thought that another can surpass him in anything. At the same time, he is frequently too lazy to make an effort to gain or hold a position. He seeks an easy victory and, like a small child, will cry out if one does not fall by itself into his lap. This attitude is largely the fault of the parents, and if they find it out in time they should try to make him see that it is cowardly to run away from effort, and that such behaviour can lead only to unpopularity and contempt. The adolescent should be encouraged in every practical way to make efforts, and should be justly praised when he succeeds. His "excuse-mongering" can be tackled differently.

### A CURE FOR GRUMBLERS

One father who became suddenly conscious that his past spoiling of his boy of fifteen had made him into a whiner took careful stock of the complaints and excuses his son made for a week. On the Saturday evening he invited him to go out for a walk and took the chance when they were alone to show him the list of "grouses" he had compiled—numbering in all some forty or fifty. He did not preach to the lad, but made him a sporting offer. If he could reduce this list to under a dozen in the following week, he would take him to a league match in a neighbouring town and afterwards to the pictures. But any "grumble" noted by father or mother would be marked up against him. The boy won on the narrowest of margins. The next week, despite another offer, there was a relapse (the fault-finding habit takes extraordinarily deep root). The third week the wager was won again, and thereafter there was a noticeable and almost automatic effort on the lad's part to check himself, without, it is hoped, the thought of any material reward being uppermost in his mind. This parent took sensible measures to stop a habit that might have wrecked his son's happiness.

No effort should be spared to curb this cantankerous spirit which, if allowed to go unchecked, can soon make a boy or girl quite unbearable to others.

Adolescents who constantly find fault are matched by a type who appear to enter into any sport or indoor game with all the vim in the world; indeed, their boisterous manners and exaggerated actions soon attract attention—exactly what they are striving for.

### SPOIL-SPORTS

Their main idea is to interfere in some way so that the game shall be spoiled. They obstruct or act the fool, giggle loudly when silence is required, indulge in horse-play or make some movement at a critical moment. This is only another way of saying, "Look at me! I am the only one here worthy of regard!" It is the old infantile desire to be noticed and made a fuss of. This weakness can show itself in a hundred forms, and generally seems to come to a head during adolescence. A permanent cure is difficult because arguments are generally useless, but a partial cure can occasionally be effected by some sharp unexpected rebuke or punishment. The lesson must be severe to produce any lasting effect. Parents often notice these and similar unfortunate traits displayed by some young person of their acquaintance. They should know that, at heart, this type of adolescent has no faith in his own abilities and, fearful of being overlooked, will manœuvre in some way, however idiotic, to gain a little attention.

### FINDING EMPLOYMENT

We have already dealt at some length with the problem of scholarship winners at secondary schools and the alternative dangers of blind alley employment, but whether a child leaves school at fourteen or fifteen, or some years later, the question of his ultimate career will come up for discussion.

Sometimes the problem is simple for the child shows a pronounced leaning towards some occupation or there is a good opening awaiting him immediately, but these cases are infrequent and for the most part the problem is far from simple.

Parents who have no idea of a vocation for their children should study one of the books on careers in the public libraries for a great deal of useful information can be gleaned here. When they want special advice, too, they should always go to the child's head teacher, for he or she will be only too glad to give them assistance.

Parents should remember, too, that unless the child has a *very* special taste, his preference may only be a fleeting whim. In early adolescence a hatred of monotony leads many boys and girls to dislike a job as soon as they are started and consequently they look around for more exciting work. There is a great danger here that



valuable years may be lost in work that will soon be abandoned. It is of the utmost importance to start aright for otherwise the child may easily become a drifter.

### **SOME POSSIBLE OPENINGS FOR BOYS**

Parents should know that there are some excellent openings for boys with a love of open-air life in the Navy, Army and Air Force. Prospects are good, and the Air Force in particular offers especially good opportunities to boys with a secondary school training as apprentices.

Boys with pronounced mathematical ability can enter competitive examinations for posts in various branches of public life—both in the civil service and the administrative staffs of large towns.

Besides these two, there are apprenticeships for all kinds of trades from printing to engineering. All of them require some kind of training, but the chances are good.

One occupation very frequently overlooked, but which seems to offer a much greater chance than formerly, is agriculture. A well-known economist declared recently that youths who could receive an agricultural training on scientific lines would find excellent opportunities before five years had passed both at home and in the colonies. He believed that world conditions would bring about a great change in food policy and that producers would enjoy better conditions than for a generation. Parents who think this worth investigating should write to the Local Agricultural Authority, who can probably put them in touch with some farmer willing to accept a student for his keep—and if the parental pocket can stand the strain, there are always the agricultural colleges.

Girls, too, have the employment problem to solve. Today they enter into competition with boys in many trades and professions, but there are still some special jobs reserved for their sex. Public or private nursing attracts as well as teaching in all its branches.

### **GIRLS SHOULD NOT NEGLECT DOMESTIC SCIENCE**

Domestic service is somewhat under a cloud at the present time, but with improving conditions the advantages of sound training, a good home, a fair amount of liberty and a guaranteed wage, deserve to be considered. A maid in a considerate family is, as a rule, much better off financially and in other ways than a clerk or shop assistant. Her expenses are small and she has no fear of unemployment. It has been urged that before leaving school the older girls should receive instruction in the management of a household and young children, and more particularly in the science of the kitchen. Expert cooks will always command good situations and, when married, their training contributes enormously to the health and happiness of their home. It is a sad mistake to look upon the



preparation of food and the care of the house as menial work. There is a rapidly growing interest in dietetics with special openings in large-scale hospital work, and far-sighted parents should consider the possibilities of a congenial career for daughters in public or private service where their culinary experience would be valued and well rewarded.

### **BAD TEMPERS AND SULKS HINDER SUCCESS**

"J—— is a good lad in every way except for his vile temper." "If it were not for E——'s sulks, no one would want a nicer girl." We constantly hear people make some such remark, and it is just these defects of character which spoil many young lives. The first lesson an adolescent has to learn is that society expects a certain standard of conduct from him and that childish breaches of good behaviour are no longer excused. A well-trained and intelligent youth will try to conform more or less to the recognized standard. Sometimes "just for devilry" he will kick over the traces, but he is usually amenable to reason and good counsel. However talented an adolescent, he cannot be said to be "grown-up" in any real sense as long as he flies into a temper at the least provocation, shows undue impatience, or acts always from impulse. Gifts of an intellectual kind never compensate for lack of patience, for it alone will bring him success in life. When a youth of the "You never know how to take him" type joins a club or society, he will be severely snubbed, or else left alone as soon as he shows his colours.

Parents of temperamental boys and girls should try to place them in a communal life of some sort where they will get their rough edges knocked off quickest, for a solitary and selfish life will only foster these unfortunate traits.

### **IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ADDRESS AND APPEARANCE**

A cultured man has been defined as one whose speech does not reveal his birthplace, nor his manners the occupation of his father. The adolescent's tone of voice, his use or misuse of grammar, and his general mode of address may have a big effect upon the place he holds in the estimate of his companions. A boy may know his job perfectly, but if he works among educated people and drops his aitches, clips his words and mixes his pronouns, he is never likely to be singled out for any work where personality is necessary for success. It is true that exceptional cleverness may often cover any number of social defects, but for the most part uncouthness, whether of speech or person, is an incalculable handicap both in business and social life. It is generally next to impossible—and in some cases far from desirable—to lose a local accent, but attention should always be paid to the right choice of words and their manner of delivery. Some adolescents—especially girls—have a tendency to

rush their speech, to gabble, splutter and eat their words. Parents and teachers should check this before it becomes a habit. Many defects of speech have been wholly or partly cured when the young people have taken up amateur dramatics, and an opportunity for any sort of public speaking or debate should always be taken advantage of.

It is only when an adolescent is discouraged, or indifferent to the opinions of others, that personal cleanliness and neatness of attire are neglected. Even when a youth has not been fortunate enough to have a good education, smartness of dress and appearance will always carry weight and create a favourable impression. Clothes alone will not make up for defects of training, but it is certain that a slovenly-dressed youth, whatever his education and ability, will stand less chance of securing a hearing than his well-groomed rival.

### **EXTRAVAGANCE IN DRESS MUST BE AVOIDED**

Some adolescents occasionally cause their parents anxiety by extravagance in their dress. They adopt an ultra-modern fashion, lacking in good taste, and thus almost ludicrously lay themselves open to criticism. A boy will wear a "wild west" hat with an exaggerated crown; a girl an almost transparent blouse. Self-expression in dress should certainly be encouraged within reasonable limits, for it is one of the greatest aids to confidence, and when mistakes of choice have to be pointed out, parents should be careful not to ridicule. By so doing they may lose any further chance of influencing a sensitive son or daughter.

It is sometimes a chance remark which carries the greatest weight. One mother had tried without success to induce a tall and well-built daughter to give up wearing an exceptionally short skirt. The girl evidently enjoyed seeing people stare at her when out walking. One day mother and daughter happened to be in a large clothing store. A well-dressed lady, obviously of good circumstances, was talking to a shop assistant. "Of course, no one with the slightest pretence to taste would wear a short skirt today," she was overhead to say. The mother made no comment, but that same evening the offending garment was handed to her with the remark, "I'm sick of this beastly colour, anyway; it can go into the rag-bag!" An adolescent will often act upon a hint like this especially when it comes from a respected quarter, where an expressed wish, or direct command, from parents would only confirm obstinacy.

### **TOO HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES ARE INJURIOUS**

The adolescent should not be called upon to shoulder heavy responsibilities. When parents are poor, a boy is often put into a part-time job as soon as he can earn a wage. This may mean that he must rise early and perhaps work for an hour or two before school

hours. The pride of earning a little pocket-money for himself will soon be lessened by his fatigue before school is finished, and by the curtailment of his liberty. He may come to believe that it is a case of all work and no play, and grow discontented. This dissatisfaction may be increased if, on leaving school, he is employed by a firm where he may be asked to work overtime.

Government restrictions limiting the hours of juvenile labour should be known to all parents, and it is their duty to see they are observed when their son or daughter gets a full-time job. No money a boy or girl can bring to the house can compensate for the loss of health and interest which results from too great a strain at this critical age. For the proper development of his character, the adolescent needs to play and to enjoy a measure of freedom for some time longer, to be at times child-like rather than childish.

### BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND LEISURE

This does not imply that the future is to be ignored or shunned in any way. Psychologists, when treating case-hardened suffering men and women, who have lost their way in life, have frequently noticed one striking fact. The majority of these patients have led either a dissolute, idle existence in their adolescence and become blasé whilst still young, or have been made to carry too great a load of responsibility while still in their teens. In the latter case they were living out a range of experience in advance of their years, and were already old men, in some senses, at a time when they should have been full of enjoyment in the health and comparative freedom of youth. It is the parents' duty to see that the balance between work and play is maintained. Ambition in a growing child should never be allowed to absorb him to the neglect of his sport and outdoor life. "Old heads on young shoulders" are often praised, but there is a very real danger that the rest of the body may follow the head and become prematurely aged.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### MY GIRL HAS A CRUSH ON HER TEACHER. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

*We are beginning to get tired of the praise our girl lavishes on her science teacher. Apparently the latter is an angel upon earth and differs from every other woman in the world. To our mind, she is a very ordinary young person, and somewhat childish at that. Most of my girl's pocket-money goes in buying flowers for her, and little presents which she is constantly purchasing. I have seen the child stand at a window for half an hour, waiting for her "ideal" to pass.*

*We have done our best to let her see that we regard her conduct as foolish, but the only result has been to make her unhappy and secretive. When the teacher is away on holiday my girl writes to her every day, and if she as much as gets a post card in return, her joy knows no bounds. This does not seem to be a healthy state of affairs, and we should be glad of an explanation and advice as to the best way to act.*

The complaint from which your daughter suffers is the "crush" referred to earlier in these pages. Many adolescent girls go through a stage when their affections tend to centre more upon an older girl or woman than upon any member of their own household or the opposite sex. Usually, this is but a passing phase, but when there are signs that the interest is becoming all-absorbing, it is as well to consider action.

It is often the case that constant reproof at home from a mother or elder sister drives the thoughts of the adolescent to someone else—a protector in spirit, one who has shown her liking for the girl. The young person must have sympathy of some sort, and gets it (or imagines she does) from the "idol" of the moment. In this case, it is the science teacher. At her age, your girl has little discrimination and, in her liking for the teacher, she makes a goddess of her. This sort of thing occurs in almost every large school, but a teacher, if she be wise, will keep the situation in hand. Your daughter's teacher may be one of the type "hungry" for affection and so is the main factor in this problem.

If there has been any misunderstanding between your girl and the family at home, get it put right at once. Show her a little more affection than usual. Then have a word with the teacher. Tactfully, you can manage to indicate that she should try not to encourage your daughter, though *the change must be gradual*. Finally, do all you can to encourage your daughter to stand on her own feet, to be independent and not to cling. You, too, must be prepared to let go, for it is a case of adjustment on both sides.

### HOW CAN I STRENGTHEN MY WILL-POWER?

*I am in my seventeenth year, and my job does not hold out any prospects. I should like to begin to study something in my spare time which would help me to a better position. The worst of it is that as soon as I sit down to read or concentrate, I have a big temptation to do something else more active. After the first day or two I have often chucked up my studies, and just wasted my time with my pals. Can you give me some hints for strengthening my will-power, so that I am able to get on with my work without these breaks?*

Every time you allow yourself to be tempted from your work you make it more difficult to carry your plans through. What you have



to do is to set up a good habit in the place of a bad one, and this is how you should begin. First of all, make quite sure of what you *really* want to achieve. If you are only lukewarm about your plans it will not take much to turn your attention to something else, and all your good resolves will fizzle out. It is an excellent plan to talk over your ideas with a more experienced person and to get the benefit of his advice. You should have no difficulty in consulting a local teacher, or someone who has a good knowledge of your subject. You may be sure they would be pleased to help you in some way or other. You may also find yourself able to attend a technical school on some evenings, even if it entails a little journey. Working in co-operation with others is an immense help at your age to getting things done, and stops one from slacking off. Finally, study these hints: (1) Don't undertake more than you feel able to carry out. (2) Keep the end in view, and when pleasure tempts you from your work, picture to yourself how happy and proud you will be when you have carried your plans through. (3) Start your studies at the same time every day, and never allow anything to stand in the way. (4) Fix up the times you will have free, and stick to these. (5) Say "No" resolutely to anyone who invites you to take an extra hour off. (6) Make no exceptions to these rules until you feel strong enough to allow yourself a little more freedom on special occasions—but make these occasions as infrequent as possible.

#### HOW MUST I TREAT A GIRL WHO WANTS TO SHOW OFF?

*In my Sunday school class of girls of between fourteen and seventeen years of age, there is one who is giving me a lot of anxiety. She always arrives late, pretends not to hear what I say, so that I have to repeat the question, and then asks questions of her own which have nothing to do with the lesson, but are only intended to make the other girls laugh. When I ignore her, as I sometimes do, she drops a book, or pretends to have a fit of coughing. I do not want to expel her from the class, for I hope that one day I may see her character change, but just now she is very trying, and I hardly know how to keep my patience. Will you please advise me what to do about it?*

This kind of girl is not an uncommon one, although she seldom uses the opportunity to make an open exhibition of herself in public. You will have noticed that the last thing she wants is to be overlooked, for she will do almost anything to get attention focused upon her and hold it there. She belongs to the openly aggressive type; but there are girls who manage to get an equal amount of attention by pretending to be just as retiring, and giving an appearance of weakness and dependence. Strange to say, both feel in their hearts that they lack some quality other girls possess. Perhaps



when they were very young they were grossly neglected, or made to think they were not wanted. They may have had some little physical handicap which placed them at a disadvantage. Both types, however, possess a strong desire to "get even," and each, after their own fashion, is determined to make somebody "sit up and take notice." The girl in your class will need very careful handling. It will be sheer waste of time to argue with her before the other girls, because that would be playing her game. Get to know more about her by finding out her home circumstances. Ask her to visit you if possible. Don't preach at her, but listen carefully to what she says. Make it your aim to persuade her to undertake some little work for you which will give her a chance to express herself, but will entail some little sacrifice on her part at the same time. If you can win her confidence, you will have gone far; but you must be prepared for many little set-backs.

### DOES THE "PIN-TABLE" HABIT SPOIL A BOY?

*My lad, just on the point of leaving school, developed a mania for those so-called amusement arcades one sees so much of nowadays. We have been generous to him in regard to pocket-money, but it would seem that this is all wasted in those foolish machines, which apparently promise so much and give so little. John is an associate of a few boys somewhat older than himself, and although he knows I disapprove he still frequents their company. I think they have led him to the "pin-table" habit, and I feel sad about the change in him. His father is inclined to treat the matter as trivial, but I regard it as anything but this. What do you think about it?*

Your son's inclination for frivolous amusement can become serious if it persists, but it is likely he will soon tire of this stupid way of wasting time and money. He is at an age when boys find it very difficult to concentrate for long at a time. The "call of the wild" is persistent, so that any attraction which tempts them away from routine is eagerly seized upon. Being accepted by companions older than himself would flatter him. Their opinions and ideas will be all important just now. Any break away will touch his pride on the quick.

What your son lacks at present is a strong interest to occupy his mind. Testing automatic machines is only a quick and expensive way of indulging his curiosity and desire to find out how things work and of pitting his skill. The idea of gain is hardly likely to be uppermost at his age. If the boy is really interested in mechanical things, your husband should enable him to take up some technical study. He could make visits with him to certain works and factories. It would be wise to turn his curiosity and mania for pulling levers and pressing buttons to some practical and profitable end.

**DO FILMS GIVE GIRLS A FALSE IDEA OF LIFE?**

*My daughter is not getting on very well with her studies at school, and in her teacher's report is described as "inattentive and lacking in concentration." She is nearly sixteen, and we want her to pass her examination and get a job this year. She goes to the cinema whenever she has the money, and seems to dream of nothing else but film stars, and the pictures she has seen. Do you think we should discourage these visits, and get her to give more attention to her homework?*

"Inattentive and lacking in concentration" would be the reverse of truth if it referred to your daughter's cinema visits, and not to the lessons in class. It is easy to see where her chief interest lies, and why she finds schoolwork so dull in comparison with the world of romantic imagination. At adolescence the world of romance is as real to many girls as the actual world, and they fly to it for pleasure and consolation at the first opportunity. The cinema helps to extend knowledge in various ways, and to stimulate the imagination. There is no doubt that the modern girl is much more "aware," in many senses, than her mother was at her age. But there is also this danger. Life as portrayed on the films is very often a gross exaggeration of normal existence. Everything takes place in a minimum of time, and happiness or misery comes to one's lot almost before the hands of the clock can get round. The adult recognizes this, but the young girl has not had sufficient experience to spot the illusion, and she is therefore apt to be discontented when events do not move with the same speed in the everyday world. Rather than forbid her to visit the cinema, try to bring her to a sense of real values. Discuss films with her at times, and from your own experience endeavour to make her see that most good things in this life have to be earned and that even when they are possessed it still requires knowledge to enable one to hold on to them. She won't think you are trying to preach if you are willing to listen to *her* remarks as well. You will find that when your girl comes to have a bigger interest, either in good books or in some other person, she will find it easier to let go the world of fantasy for the reality.

**A MARRIED WOMAN ATTRACTS MY BOY. IS THIS "CALF-LOVE"?**

*My boy, who is fifteen years of age, worries me very much at this moment. We have a neighbour, a young married woman of about twenty-six, and he follows her with his eyes as if she is all in all to him. She, for her part, regards him as a nice boy, and is kind to him, taking an interest in his hobbies and reading, which he discusses with her frequently, though he is definitely shy in her presence. My neighbour is a nice person*

*in every way, but I feel that my son is thinking too much about her, and this seems to me a queer state of mind for one of his years. Is this the calf-love we so often hear about, and what should I do about it?*

Yes. Your son's infatuation for this young married woman is an example of calf-love. Numbers of young boys fall in "love" with women almost old enough to be their mothers, but there is seldom a sexual element about this type of affection. Lads in the early teens often tease and jostle girls of their own age, treating them almost as if they were of their own sex. Very little emotion enters into these comradely encounters, however. A boy's heroine is more likely to be a much older woman whom he can adore from a distance. He will, as you say, follow his idol with his eyes and take every opportunity to learn all he can about her, and yet as soon as he is actually in her presence—to quote your letter again—he turns shy and, as a rule, is not at all at ease. Adolescent boys are greatly affected by flattery and any direct attentions from adult friends. Your young neighbour may have praised the boy or admired some work of his. This would awaken his gratitude and respect in the first place, and he would be eager to see her often and earn further compliments. You may have noticed that he is well informed of her movements and is usually about when she calls upon you.

You would be unwise to attempt to quench his enthusiasm by teasing or ridiculing him. If you were persistent enough you might have a measure of success, but, as a result, he might approach the opposite sex with fear or shun them altogether when he got older, reading a repetition of his earlier experience. If there is no "cooling off" on his part you should discuss the matter with your neighbour. She could still be kind to your son, but if she is more concerned with your peace of mind than in enjoying this juvenile homage she will know what to say to the lad without hurting, but with none the less effect. This done, it would be a good idea to give the boy a thorough change of some sort.

#### MY DAUGHTER MET AN IMPOSTER. HOW CAN I CONVINCE HER?

*My daughter of sixteen is unhappy and depressed. A few weeks ago, after singing at a party, a woman congratulated her upon her "wonderful" voice, and offered to train her for professional work. I knew my girl had no special talent, but I allowed her to visit this woman who, our vicar told me, was a widow and a new-comer to the parish. Soon my daughter was there every day, and would make any excuse when I wanted her company. Unknown to her I went to see this new friend. I disliked her over-painted face and her frowsy flat with its pictures in bad taste. When I told her the position she was very*

*rude and asked me to leave. Shortly afterwards my daughter went as usual, but now this "lady" informed her she did not want to see her again, and shouted something about "common people." Despite this treatment my girl is furious with me. Can you explain and tell me how to handle this unfortunate situation?*

Boys and girls in their teens are apt to take both things and people at face value. They have no background of experience to guide them, and, apart from occasional intuitions, must accept nearly everything on trust. Their enthusiasms, too, are seldom half-hearted, and when they are disappointed the drop is generally severe. But, fortunately, they have plenty of "spring" and are soon on their feet again. Your daughter was enticed by the surest and oldest of baits—flattery. Few young girls can withstand the influence of anyone who knows how to play upon their weakest point.

At her age she has little discrimination and undoubtedly thought her friend's motives to be entirely unselfish. This woman was possibly of the vampire type, liking nothing better than to be worshipped by others. You are fortunate to have discovered her true character as her influence upon your daughter might have become pernicious. Choose a favourable moment to explain to your child that if the woman had had any real affection for her, she could not have behaved so rudely to you both. When your daughter comes to realize this—as she must sooner or later—she will regain her spirits and be grateful to you for your intervention. Time is the best healer in these cases.

#### **WHY DOES LUXURY MAKE MY DAUGHTER DISCONTENTED?**

*My daughter, eighteen years of age, has just returned from a visit to an old school friend whose family moved to London three years ago. Since leaving here they have come into money and now live in a big house and keep servants. They gave my girl a very good time, taking her to dine in fashionable restaurants and visiting theatres and cinemas. I thought she would come back pleased after her holiday, but to my surprise she has shown a discontented spirit, asking why we can't have this and that, and must we always appear so poor. My husband and I have had a hard struggle to keep things going at times, and we feel hurt by our girl's unreasonable behaviour. Please advise.*

You should not take your daughter's attitude too much to heart. Her experience of a luxurious life has turned her head and warped her judgments temporarily. Many persons thrown into unusual circumstances react in a way they would not do if they could be given time to take their bearings, and see things in right proportion.



Young people have not the same control over their reactions as a normal adult, and their criticisms and remarks tend to be exaggerated and one-sided. Your daughter is still living in her holiday experiences, and is unwilling to come back to her humdrum workaday world. All her views are coloured now by the memories of the hectic time she had in town.

You should give her time to settle down a bit. Then discuss the position with her as calmly as you can. Tell her—if she does not know—how you are placed financially. Ask her what she would do if given a free hand to manage the family resources. "Getting down to brass tacks" has often the effect of a cold douche on imaginative minds inclined to shirk reality. At the same time, give a reasonable ear to any complaint she may make about unnecessary restrictions in the home. If her life—as seems probable—has been somewhat narrow, try to provide wider interests for her. Unless your daughter is of a selfish nature, she should appreciate your efforts to understand her present frame of mind.

### SHOULD YOUNG GIRLS HOLIDAY IN SEASIDE CAMPS?

*My two girls of sixteen and seventeen are mad upon going to a seaside camp this summer. I should have no objection to this in the ordinary way, but a friend whose boy was at this camp last year tells me things which have made me somewhat anxious. It is hinted there is very little discipline about the place; young people are allowed to come and go at all hours of the night. There is dancing every evening until almost midnight, making it impossible to get quiet sleep before this time. Although the general run of visitors are quite decent people there are individuals who are not over scrupulous in some ways—definitely undesirable characters. I don't want to disappoint my girls, but do you think I should be wise in giving them permission?*

Yes, with certain safeguards. There are many excellent seaside and country camps where everything is beyond reproach, just as there are camps which seem to cater for a very different class of visitor. It is your duty as a father to see that your daughters do not stay at any place where the moral tone is questionable. They are too young to have had much experience of the world, and might be victimized in some ways by clever and plausible scoundrels. Although on their guard in the ordinary way, the novelty and excitement of camp life might throw them temporarily off their balance. Young girls also need rest at night if they are to reap the full benefits of a holiday, and unceasing jazz music and late dancing are anything but conducive to this.

If, after full inquiries, you are still doubtful about this particular camp, you should suggest another resort where conditions are known



to be all that you desire. Another way out is to put the girls in the care of some guest who would be a sort of chaperon. In nearly every camp there is a fair proportion of married people. Perhaps you could arrange for your daughters to be accommodated near such a couple. Camping life is a splendid tonic, and with reasonable precautions should entail no dangers of any sort. Whatever you do, be careful, in talking the matter over with your girls, neither to arouse their resentments nor, by your suspicions, to stimulate undesirable interests.

### WHY ARE BOYS ATTRACTED BY UNDESIRABLE GIRLS?

*My boy, sixteen years of age, and brought up in comparatively good circumstances, has fallen in with a girl living in a very low-class neighbourhood near here. He is seen about with her a lot, and neighbours have mentioned it to me frequently. I know nothing of the girl, but the position to me seems generally undesirable. I have not yet spoken to the lad, thinking that he might mention it to me, when I would be better placed to deal with it. He is rather sensitive, but I have implicit trust in his decency in every respect. What do you think can be the attraction, and is the matter one for serious thought?*

It is somewhat exceptional for a boy of sixteen to court a girl seriously. At that age the adolescent is usually more interested in sport and the doings of his particular boy friends or "gang." In any case, he would feel too self-conscious about the affair to discuss it at home. It is not always a good sign when a boy so young spends a great part of his free time in the company of girls. It looks as if his efforts to share the pursuits of other lads might have met with discouragement, and he turns from their more strenuous recreations to find solace in the company of the weaker sex. Another fact seems to point to this. Adolescents who have not too great a store of confidence frequently associate with others younger than themselves or of a lower level of intelligence. In this way they make sure of retaining their superiority. This may explain your boy's choice of a girl of an inferior station.

You should ask your son to introduce you to the girl. There may be something about her character which appeals. If she proves personally acceptable to you, point out to both young people that your son's career must be thought of first of all; time must not be wasted which could be profitably employed. But if you find the girl to be definitely of low character, you should point out to your son the danger he is incurring. Although adolescent love is often very passionate, it can easily change its object. The chances are that if your boy moved to another district he would soon find other attractions. In any case, it might be better for him to seek occupation away from home where he could get a new outlook on life.

## SHOULD ADOLESCENTS MARRY?

*I have an only girl, seventeen years of age, and she has recently told me she will eventually marry a neighbour's son—a lad who is estimable in every way. But he is only eighteen years of age, and earns, obviously, a very small salary. My girl says he is anxious to marry her before he is twenty. He is rather strong-willed and of definite opinions, and says he believes in early marriage. Rather a unique type for his age, I think, and my girl seems to be strongly influenced by him. The girl is now thinking only of marriage, and does not take the interest in her work she formerly did. How shall I deal with these young people and the situation which has arisen?*

If your girl's sweetheart has a reasonable prospect of being able to maintain a home you should put no obstacle in the way of this marriage. Young men of proved character and determination command respect. You will be lucky to have a son-in-law who, at his early age, already knows his own mind and is willing to face up to his responsibilities. A girl of eighteen or nineteen, provided she is of average development, is almost a mature woman, and quite able to fulfil the duties of a home. Your daughter's present neglect of her work is obviously accounted for by the big place her future occupies in her mind, which would tend to make her present occupation of secondary importance, but also by the uncertainty which overhangs her marriage until you have expressed your readiness to fall in with their plans. It would be better for you to give your decision now. When the path ahead is clear there will be an increased incentive to good work, enabling both the young man and woman to throw their undivided energies into preparations for the future.

## SECTION III COURTSHIP

### CHAPTER 7.—FALLING IN LOVE

#### WHAT FALLING IN LOVE MEANS

**I**F young men or women in love were asked to describe their feelings exactly they would be set a quite impossible task. Try as they might to express themselves in words, they would have to confess that what they felt was much too deep to be told. Equally difficult would be their attempt to solve the problem of why they fell in love. They might make many statements, believing all of them true, and yet be unable to say with confidence that this, or

that, influenced them most. Every normal youth in the late teens is ready for love experience. A young man needs something to come into his life which will encourage him to surpass himself in various ways; that will take away that curious feeling of loneliness which often comes upon him even when in the company of friends; a girl who will admire the things about himself he desires to have praised; and who will, in short, give a greater significance to his life and make it feel worth while. The girl may not be able to state in such precise terms what she feels about the desired relationship, but she will certainly be proud to be chosen above all other girls, to know that she has a protector at her side to fight valiantly on her behalf, and perhaps realize, though less consciously, that here is the potential father of her children.

### IS LOVE BLIND?

It has been said with some truth that young people are more in love with love than with any particular individual. The emotional experience is often so intense and overwhelming as to blind lovers to many things which will be only too clear when the first great surge of newly stirred passion has calmed down. It is as if Nature has schemed to bring the sexes together and to throw them off their guard with a subtle intoxicant, rendering them incapable, for the time, of bringing their critical faculties into play. That this is often the case is proved by the great number of problems which arise when the lovers begin to face facts squarely and to size up their respective positions. The girl may be amazed that the youth who for months had glanced furtively at her in the train, hardly daring to smile in case he should be rebuffed, who had been at a total loss for words when they were introduced at a dance by a mutual friend, and who on more than one occasion had needed a little sly encouragement when he seemed to have lost heart in the chase, should now be strutting by her side with pride of conquest written all over his face. She may ask herself if she has done well by submitting so early, if there would not have been more fun in playing the tantalizing, waiting game still a little longer. She is not so sure, now that the first excitement is over, if she wants to settle down just yet, and be possessed in this masterful way. Still, it is all very wonderful, and Jack is a dear. . . .

The young man is perhaps trying to reason out why the timid, unapproachable lass, who seemed to be crossing his path almost every day—and sometimes on the most unexpected occasions—who hardly spoke two words to him when introduced and refused to dance on the plea of fatigue, but was seen three minutes later whirling in the arms of another man, who rejected his proposal for a rendezvous so sharply that it was a month before he dared address her again, should now be telling him in no uncertain tones where

he wants to go, what he must do, and which of her acquaintances he is to greet and which ignore. Of course, he loves her more dearly every day, but he hardly thought. . . . These lovers realize in some way that their world has suddenly changed; that they would be unthinkableably lonely without each other; that in many ways they now live in a kingdom of two, outside which people and events are only important in so far as they minister to their happiness. The only clear thing about the whole muddling business is that love implies a joint harmonious desire, of body, mind and emotion.

### FIRST LOVE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The loves which spring up in the late teens and early twenties have a special significance. Emotion is tense and the power of discretion limited. Surface values are apt to fascinate and delude, and the hidden, sterling qualities are not always seen. Physical attraction plays a leading part: girls will vie for the attentions of the athlete, the track champion or the actor; boys for the graceful dancer, the "good sport" with the free and easy manners, the bright-eyed demure maiden with unmistakable "sex appeal." Competition plays a big part in many early love affairs. Jealousies and tiffs are frequent; an attractive new-comer on the scene may cause a reversal of feeling. Where girls predominate in numbers, the boy is more likely to be tempted to experiment. It is perhaps the exception for a first love to last, for with increasing experience of men and women both sexes tend to grow more selective and to demand higher standards in their choice.

But if either boy or girl is profoundly in love, and for some cause loses the partner, the effect on the after love-life may be grave. Especially can this happen in the case of the girl, for to her a deep and true affection is the supreme experience of her life. The sense of loss may be so great that for years a haunting fear may persist that love will always elude her. This may lead to unnatural reserve on her part, holding back affection and bringing unhappiness. On the other hand, there are numerous examples of two lovers "made for each other," who, linking up fortunes whilst still in the teens, have lived long years to bless their destiny.

### WHEN LOVE IS AN ILLUSION

Love can prove a serious disappointment when one of the partners tries to make it serve a selfish end, for it is an unfortunate fact that not every person has the ability to love another wholly and exclusively. The power to love is as much a gift as any other talent, and like others has to be cultivated and practised unceasingly. Some lovers think more of their physical needs than of the well-being of their mates. Love for them is only another name for sexual appetite, and its limit is just where satisfaction ends. A man like

this may attract at first by his force and initiative, but as soon as the partner sees he is careless of her feelings, her affection cools and may turn to dislike or even disgust. There are men who look upon every young woman as their legitimate prey. Brought up in homes where control has neither been taught nor practised, they possess few fine sentiments. Occasionally they are able to hide their real characters and to impose upon others for a time, but unless they meet with equally degenerate types it is not long before their designs come to light. There is one good test which can be applied to problem "lovers" of this sort. They should be put upon their honour, and given the opportunity of making a real sacrifice of some kind, for as soon as such a proposal is made they invariably show up in their true colours.

Lovers naturally desire to create the best of impressions. Some of them talk and act big to demonstrate their worth. Young men boast of their prowess at games, of the rivals they have beaten; of the girls who are pining for their attentions, of the fine positions which are coming to them in business. The girls may say less, but they can give the impression of being something very different from what they really are. It is too much to expect that this camouflage can be kept up for long, and when, in course of time, exaggerations and pretensions are seen to be of little worth, love may quickly cool. Sweethearts, then, should believe that honesty is always the best policy in love as in anything else and that deceit is almost sure to be discovered sooner or later, and once discovered may have disastrous effects.

### **ARE THE SEXES EQUALLY INTERESTED IN EACH OTHER ?**

The growth of affection between the sexes is one of the most baffling of all problems, and to find complete equality of affection between any particular pair of lovers is so rare as to be almost a miracle. Every feeling of life's happiness rests in love. This is sensed intuitively by nearly all men and women who realize that existence, without someone upon whom their affections can be centred, would hardly be endurable. From early manhood to old age this emotion occupies a foremost place in the consciousness of both sexes, and can only be stifled or ignored at the peril of both physical and mental ill-health. For the love between two partners to be equal in every way there would have to be the same willingness to serve the interests of the mate, the same desire to make self-sacrifices, together with the wish to be equally passionate and to have the capacity to suffer to the same degree. Men and women neither think nor feel exactly alike. There are natural psychological differences of character. The man, as a rule, is more active, aggressive and passionate; the woman more passive and submissive. But all shades and degrees of these qualities may be found in both



sexes. There are men who allow women to treat them as doormats and women who take the lead in every family affair of importance.

Mystery is probably at the basis of sexual attraction, and the mystery of sex will probably enthrall as long as a male or female remains on earth. Both sexes are impelled by a natural curiosity to unveil the secrets of the opposite, and will always seek each other's company with equal zest. Every pair have many set-backs in their search for mutual happiness and satisfaction, but these will be lessened if they can avoid one great mistake—the taking of each other's love for granted, for this means a ceasing of effort to merit and retain the partner's affection and esteem. Love has to be learned in a school where the lessons are longer and more difficult than those required for any other study.

### PEOPLE WHO CANNOT LOVE

In all ranks of society are found some men and women who go through life ardently worshipping one idol—themselves. Although they may have pleasant company manners, appear kind and sociable to strangers, and seem willing to take a share in forwarding social ideals yet in their inner heart they are anarchic and anti-social, and at the first call for real unselfishness they default and show how self-centred they are. They may have been reared in homes where they were either pampered or forced to put up a continual struggle against adverse conditions, so that love for them more often than not means the snatching of what pleasures can be obtained without the desire to offer anything in return. A girl who is courted by a youth of this type may be charmed by his bold and frank approaches, and believe him to be the most courteous of lovers. It is true she may notice he has little patience, and is vexed if she turns up five minutes late at a rendezvous. It is likely he will not consult her as to which cinema they will visit, for he has already decided that in advance. She may not mind this, however, as it relieves her of the responsibility of making a choice. Perhaps they may share a box of chocolates during the show, and possibly his fingers dip in it the oftener. When this young man thinks he has established himself in the girl's affections, it will be "I want you to do this" and "You've got to do that" all the time, or, to ring the changes, he may pretend to be suffering in some way and so try to work on her compassion. This may go on for some time, but in the end, if she has any discernment, she will send him elsewhere to set up his one-man show.

Similarly, there is the case of the young man deeply in love with a pretty but vain maiden, and who finds her sidelong glances and languorous speech so entrancing that he is prepared to anticipate her every want. This kind of girl generally wants a great deal, but rather suggests it than asks openly. She will ruin her dance-frock if she walks thirty yards over a pavement showing the faintest

sign of damp. ("Oh, yes! A taxi, dearest.") Could he possibly fetch her from the office on Saturday morning; she would like the head clerk to see them leave together. ("Certainly, dearest, but you know I'm booked to play away with the team, and that means being at the station before twelve-thirty. Still, if you particularly want . . .") She does, and he lets his club down. One day he misses an appointment. She forgives him with a sigh. The following day he goes by arrangement to fetch her for a dance. Her mother deplores she is in bed with a bad cold. He sends her a huge bunch of flowers from a nearby florist. Disappointed and depressed, he turns into an hotel for a drink, but on leaving an hour later he runs across her at the corner taking the dogs for a walk! This unhappy dangling may go on for months before the disillusioned lover is obliged to confess that M——'s idea of love is to have someone on a string she can work like a puppet and that it is a hundred to one chance that any marriage with her is doomed from the start to failure.

### LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

One of the strangest phenomena in love is the case of the young man or woman who falls head over ears in love with a perfect stranger at first sight. Why should this be so? Gripped fast by this sudden passion, with every sense profoundly stirred, reason seems here to play no part at all. A girl may be so moved as to pale and show signs of faintness. The youth can be seized with an inexplicable tremor, and seem unable to control his speech. This is not a matter of everyday occurrence, but that it does occasionally happen is indisputable. It should be remembered, however, that it is seldom that both man and woman experience this simultaneously, for this explains why many of these sudden infatuations last only for a short time. There is also the danger in some cases that a man, in his intense eagerness to come to a closer acquaintance, may be too impulsive and receive a sharp rebuff. Some girls are frightened and put on their guard by a too sudden and fervent declaration of devotion. "Proceed with caution" should be the rule here, even more so than in the usual love-affair.

When it is a case of both parties falling in love with each other at the same time, one of two things may happen. On the one hand, long association may serve to deepen the mutual love, and it turns out to be one of those "marriages made in heaven." With another couple it may soon become evident—to one of them, at least—that illusion has played a big part in their romance and, despite much appearing to be right on the outside, there is a deep divergence of views upon certain vital matters. To continue the relationship, then, would assuredly open the way for disputes and disagreements of all sorts.

It must be stated here, however, that real "love at first sight" is



*"Love at first sight" is by no means only the ideal of the novelist. If it is experienced by sane and balanced young people it is the happiest and truest kind of love, and may endure for a lifetime; on the other hand, with unstable people it often proves an illusion.*

probably commoner than is supposed and is often the happy result of correct intuition. Human intuition is very powerful and under certain circumstances can be more successful than the greatest foresight.

The final decision here should be made on the characters of the pair. If they are balanced people with minds of their own, not too unstable and changeable, then the marriage has every hope of success.

### DIFFICULTIES IN SECURING INTRODUCTIONS

In a more formal age, when a strict etiquette was observed, it was often a problem of great difficulty for a young man or woman to get to know anyone of the opposite sex. Apart from a mutual acquaintance who could bring about an introduction, the chances were meagre and really came down to two—either the remote possibility of an accidental meeting or the danger of giving serious offence in introducing oneself informally and casually.

Today, introductions are much easier to arrange, for social comradeship is much more informal, and through dance-halls, sports clubs, hiking parties, and in all places where mixing and conversations are general, friendship is made possible without difficulty, and can easily ripen into love. When there is a wish to meet some particular individual it is seldom difficult to find out which church, club or party he or she attends. It is then easy to join it and the field is open. Some young people have a facility for "picking up" friends, but prudence should be exercised here, for there may be hidden snags which may give trouble later on in quite unexpected ways. The bland young man who accosts a girl, a perfect stranger, in a public thoroughfare with, "Let's see, we've met before, haven't we?" may be honestly mistaken, but his action would not justify any particular confidence in his intentions. Introductions, too, that are brought about through correspondence clubs must be carefully watched. There are, of course, perfectly genuine inquirers on the books, but this medium gives certain unscrupulous characters the chance of exploiting members for their own profit.

### SHY AND LONELY LOVERS

Many young people living solitary lives would welcome a close friend with whom they could discuss their hopes, anxieties, work, and ambitions. But here they are faced with the problem of how to overcome their shyness. However great their confidence in their own particular job, they are all more or less afraid of seeking warm companionship with one of the opposite sex. There are four principal reasons for their fears. They think their personal appearance is not sufficiently good to recommend them; that they will be snubbed or ridiculed for presuming to make advances; that they have no conversation or that a friend might make too big demands



of them. Every fear, it will be noted, is in regard to themselves. Extreme self-consciousness is at the root of their troubles. "What sort of figure shall I cut?" or "How will that affect me?" are the questions they ask themselves continually, when it would be better to inquire, "How can I make this one happier?" or "What service can I render here?" What they all need is the urge to some form of social activity which will so absorb their energies as to leave them no time to think of themselves.

One of the main reasons why young men and women are often shy is because they have set before themselves an unattainable standard of perfection. They will not attempt anything which they are not sure they can do perfectly. What they fail to grasp is that there is a learning and a trial stage to everything—love-making not excepted—and that many errors and mistakes must of necessity be made before one becomes even moderately expert. When practically everybody has to go through the mill at some time or other, to be afraid that one's pride will suffer because of some slip or mistake is surely the height of folly.

### A CURE FOR SHYNESS

In a big southern port the secretary of a well-known relief fund remarked that on the rare occasions when his junior clerk—a shy but intelligent youth—turned up at organized dances and parties, he seemed to stand aloof and to be very much on his own. This secretary was too much of a psychologist to insist upon the young man mixing with the others. Instead, he asked him one day if he would care to work on two evenings each week with a group of volunteers who were investigating various claims for assistance. Somewhat reluctantly he agreed, although he had no faith in his ability to help. The leader of the group was a very positive character and his energy and enthusiasm so impressed the latest recruit that, within a month, he lost a great part of his diffidence and even offered to undertake a special job alone. A shy young person would do well to seek a positive mate, but unfortunately, as a rule, the diffident generally marry someone who suffers from almost the same disability as themselves.

One often hears that a Miss X is successful because she has "sex appeal," and that Miss Y, who has little, is a complete wallflower. To define sex appeal is no easy problem. It is certainly not necessarily dependent on the possession of a pretty face, a good figure, or an alluring gait. It is much more elusive than this, and depends far more on personality. There are any number of well-built young women with good features and complexions who would pass most tests of beauty, and yet fail to be singled out in company. The possessor of sex appeal generally has a combination of gifts. A neat figure is, of course, an essential, but over and above the physical



charm there is a vivacity of spirit and a certain "lightness" which cheers and stimulates all they meet. This power to please and attract can be a dangerous asset if a girl means to use her charm to get what she wants regardless of others. Men fall passionately in love with her, and she is often tempted to play one off against another. This seldom leads to lasting popularity and in the end she may be disappointed herself.

A young man who falls in love with a particularly popular girl should always be warned that he will likely have occasion for jealousy. His sweetheart may be perfectly sincere, and show no desire to flirt, but she will be certain to have many flatterers, and he a host of would-be rivals. It seems often a case of sour grapes to decry anything or anyone of more than average brilliance or fascination. But the young person with pronounced sex appeal has to be more than ordinarily level-headed, and determined, to escape many of the trials which make the path of courtship more one of thorns rather than of roses.

### WHEN TO GIVE THE FIRST KISS

"When may I give her a first kiss?" is a problem which occupies many a bashful lover. This question has only one answer—*at the right moment!* And that precise moment the good sense and tact of the lover must decide. He should offer no embrace until he is practically certain it will be accepted without protest, even if not quite so ardently returned. It is a great mistake to force an unwanted kiss. A sensitive girl may regard this as the taking of an unwarranted liberty, and be so offended that the lover may be afraid to venture again. To be entirely satisfactory, a kiss must not only be welcomed but responded to actively. It requires the co-operation of both partners. An impetuous lover may think that by pressing an embrace upon a girl he will break down her barriers of reserve. He is wrong, for she is more likely to increase her resistance to his premature advances, and ground will be lost instead of gained. By exercising self-control, and studying her reactions carefully, he should know the instant when her intellectual consent is given, when the kiss is not only welcomed but fervently desired.

Cheap kisses give little pleasure, for they tend to make love a shallow adventure. A genuine kiss, springing from deep affection and appreciation of the partner's qualities, puts a seal upon the lovers' union. They feel that henceforth they belong to each other. There are frivolous young people who exchange kisses after the slightest acquaintance. They are able to do this because they possess no depth of feeling, and do not know what it is to be deeply stirred. In marriage they will be found unsatisfactory partners. A first kiss is a wonderful event to a maiden sincerely in love. She may be so perturbed as to be thrown off her balance for a time:

be absent-minded, dreamy and unable to concentrate. This embrace is a foretaste of the raptures of the love life she hopes to enjoy with a chosen mate, an awakening to a new world, and therefore a red-letter day she will never forget.

### PHYSICAL ATTRACTION IS NOT ENOUGH

Although beauty of form and feature will always attract and be certain of a host of admirers, it is not by itself a sure foundation upon which to build one's hopes for a lifetime of happiness. Supremely good looks do not, as a rule, last for many years. It is the exception to find a married woman of the working and middle classes who has preserved all her attractions after motherhood and household cares have taken their due. Up to the early twenties Nature seems lavish with its gifts, for pretty faces abound. But after that age the individual must take over the responsibility for preserving her charms. If he or she is bad-tempered, greedy or lazy, these defects of character will soon be registered on the face. Cosmetics may help, but they will be powerless to hide the tell-tale lines completely, for it is now that spiritual qualities come to take a foremost part in the framing of the features.

Without depth of character, physical charms alone can never hold the lovers together for long. The true bond between a man and woman is that *inner* understanding and sympathy which survives all the shocks and accidents outer circumstances can bring. Real lovers will certainly have differences of opinion over some questions, get "touchy" at times and give each other a "bit of their minds." But all this is merely on the surface and does not touch the core of their affection.

### HOW TO KNOW IF ONE IS LOVED

"Do you *really* love me?" This question is asked so often by some lovers that the repetition becomes almost mechanical, and can indeed cause considerable displeasure. This search for reassurance has two possible causes: either there is an underlying fear that the partner may be lost, or alternatively it is to minister to their vanity and pride. As for the first, with constant repetition the reassurance soon lacks its first significance. If the doubting lover could be quiet for a time this problem would solve itself. A hundred different things can tell far plainer than any words what place is held in the partner's heart. It should not take a courting couple long to find out if they are suited to each other. If the physical presence of each is the source of a constant sense of joy, that is an excellent start. The slightest repulsion of any sort which may arise is a fatal bar to complete happiness. A much surer test is the interest and willingness each displays in the effort to understand the other's character.

If, after several evenings spent together, John has given Mary a non-stop account of his life, family, friends, sports and prejudices,

and has never paused to ask if she has parents living, or brothers and sisters, Mary may reasonably suspect that John's chief interest is himself, and always will be. Joan has been walking out with Peter for a month and has never once inquired about his work, the books he reads or his ambitions, but has made him listen to an endless tirade against silly old Miss Chump at the office, or the beastly little clerk who thinks all the girls are ready to fall for him. Peter should know by this time that Joan's head is as empty of ideas as her heart is empty of any power to evoke and retain a deep affection. The willingness to be patient and attentive, to put one's personal likes aside and to show a real interest in the concerns of others—these are the signs that a lover has the power to make marriage a success. There is no such thing as a perfect lover, and he or she who spends a lifetime looking for one will die soured and disappointed. Furthermore, one may soon come to love the mate's weaknesses even more than his strength. But, at the same time, the strength must always be there and available in time of need.

### LIKING AND LOVING

"Yes! I like him very, very much, but I cannot say any more. He says he will teach me to love him. I wonder!" Upon the right solving of such a problem a life's happiness may well depend. A woman, as a rule, is more uncertain in her feelings than a man. She cannot be brought so easily to give a decided opinion on any important matter. The prospect of marriage and all it entails is a very serious business for her, and she rightly feels she should not be rushed. This is particularly the case when she has to analyse her emotions and ask herself if she would be content to share her life with a certain man. He may be working in the same shop or office, and they have perhaps been accustomed to meet for a chat every day. He has a fair position, with prospects, and is steady and dependable; he has often gone out of his way to do her a kindness. One day when they were alone together in the office, she allowed him to kiss her. It is true she was flattered, and a trifle agitated, but when she saw him the next time she knew she would not mind if he embraced her again or not. Soon afterwards he was away ill, and she missed him badly when she wanted help with her work. She was very pleased to see him back at his desk again. Now he has asked her to marry him, and she is as undecided as ever.

This young woman would be unwise to marry while there still remained the chance of meeting some man who could stir her to the depths. When that moment arrived she would know that all other "loves" counted for nothing in comparison. If it is a case with her of seeking security and a home, and leaving the physical side of marriage to take care of itself, she may find some large measure of content, and even happiness in the proffered partnership. It is

also true that marriage helps to develop many qualities scarcely noticeable before. But, unless this girl is so sure of herself that nothing could induce her to break her marriage vows, she might suffer greatly should her "real partner" ever come upon the scene.

So-called lover marriages do not always turn out successfully. They hold, however, far more chance of a real and profound happiness than the match made solely on the strength of friendship and affection.

### FAULTY HEREDITY AND ITS PROBLEMS

A woman must be strong to stand marriage and motherhood. The man must be of sound physique and have no hereditary taint. It is a matter for congratulation when both man and woman are sound in mind and body, for it argues well for the health of any children born to them. There are few families whose medical case histories are entirely free of the major illnesses, and it is the duty of any couple who propose to get married to find out if there is any medical reason against it, or if it is necessary to take special precautions of any kind. Married life presents enough problems in the ordinary way without having cases of sickness to contend with. A permanent invalid in the home of a young couple is one of the greatest misfortunes, for although it may lead to heroic sacrifices and bring out the best side of the character, it is a sad handicap to the healthy partner. Lovers who come from families with a tubercular history should seek skilled advice as to their fitness to marry and rear children. To "risk all for love" may be a very fine thing when only the man and woman are concerned, but it is grossly unfair that children should be born whose lives are tainted from the very beginning.

### SHOULD COUSINS MARRY?

It is a popular belief that the children of cousin-marriages are below the average in general fitness. This is not the fact when the families of both husband and wife enjoy good health, but any particular weakness in the family stock—even two or three generations back—has a better chance of showing itself when both partners have the same blood. Modern psychology takes yet another view of this problem. It is argued that the "strong" man leaves his home and takes a wife by capture from "another tribe." He who has less courage fears to venture abroad and marries within the family. It is, of course, stupid to apply this rule to all cousin-marriages, for many of them turn out excellently. But should there be any tendency to a marked nervousness or neurosis on *both* sides it is likely that a strong predisposition to these ills may be transmitted to the children.

The inheritance of mental illness is one of the greatest tragedies in life, and great discretion should be shown before marrying into a

family where it is known that the stock is weak. This can cause dreadful unhappiness, and for their own sake as well as their children lovers should never rush impulsively into marriage without a reasonable expectation that there will be good health on both sides and a hope for their children in the future, that they may grow up into strong and healthy adults.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### CAN "PETTING" SPOIL REAL LOVE ?

*Can you tell me if there is anything wrong in "petting"? My parents were what you would call Puritans and belonged to a very strict religious sect. I had no sex instruction from my father, but he often gave me to understand that intimacy of any sort before marriage was sinful, and must not be indulged in. I am now working in a big city store and often hear other young men boasting of their love exploits. On one occasion when I ventured to tell them my ideas they laughed at me, and said no girl would think I was anything of a man, or want to go out with a "pi" like myself. I was rather taken aback by this, for I don't want to be thought queer in any way. Will you please give me your opinion ?*

Young men who are continually boasting of their sexual prowess come under suspicion. This type are not nearly such fine gallants as they would like one to believe. They are usually under-sexed, or of so low a moral character as to be regardless of the well-being of the girls with whom they associate. Men possessed of deep, passionate feeling rarely discuss their love experiences or broadcast accounts of their conquests. Much of the flirtation between the sexes is of a harmless nature; it is an attempt to get on familiar enough terms to be able to converse together more freely. A sensible girl will be on her guard against anyone who ventures to take an unwarranted liberty, or offends her sense of dignity in any way. She may not object to occasional kisses, but is aware she will not rise in a man's esteem if favours are granted too easily. Young people who go in for promiscuous petting are liable to make this an end in itself. To some of them one man or woman is almost as good as another, and the fine sentiments and feelings to which a genuine and unselfish love can give rise are practically unknown to fickle lovers.

Most people of sincere feeling will see in petting little more than an attempt to get cheap excitement at the least possible cost, whilst a real lover will be just as careful to do nothing which might involve a loss of respect. It is likely that fresh contacts and experiences will modify some of your views where they are at all narrow, but it would



be foolish to let the taunts of irresponsible companions tempt you to experiments which, by their nature, could provide no lasting satisfaction.

### WHY DOES MY DAUGHTER LOVE ONLY "TIED" MEN?

*I am greatly puzzled by the behaviour of my daughter of nineteen who is always in love, or about to fall in love, with either an engaged or a married man, or someone quite beyond her reach. The strange thing is that she is a very pretty girl and has no lack of suitors. If she cared she could choose from among a number of eligible young men, but she seems almost indifferent to their attentions and fixes upon people who are never likely to be anything to her. Do you think there is something abnormal about this? I have tried to show how silly it all is, but she only gets angry and tells me I know nothing of her feelings. Can you explain her conduct and advise?*

It looks as if your daughter belongs to a class of women who rarely find content in a normal love. Any affair which is ordinary—that is to say, straightforward, and offers no more obstacles than the average courtship—does not appeal to them. They are looking for difficulties—and, incidentally, for trouble—and want all the excitement of the chase without any real desire to secure the brush! Sometimes they worship a "tied" man at a distance, may send him anonymous love-letters or messages, or, when more brazen, intrude themselves upon him and try to engage his attention. Heedless of the unhappiness they may cause to other women, they pride themselves when a victim is foolish enough to fall for them. But here the incident usually ends, for the girl has no use for the man she has trapped; she is interested only in the netting.

Perhaps, when she was a child, she loved someone who was already bound by affection, and since that time the love object has always been a man who belonged to another. Another reason may be that from fears of all the love relationship implies, she holds herself aloof from any possible offer of marriage. A less frequent motive, and the most despicable, is the case of the woman whose thrill and pride is in robbing other women of their rightful partners. Only in this way can she satisfy her abnormal love nature. If your daughter could be brought to recognize the source of her peculiar attitude that might help. She should be encouraged to mix with normal young people and share their interests. One day, possibly, she may overstep the mark and get a sharp enough lesson to induce her to set her future affections in a more profitable direction.

### SHOULD A MANAGER MARRY A FACTORY HAND?

*I am twenty-eight years of age and under-manager of a factory employing numbers of young girls, most of whom are from very*

*poor families. About three months back I noticed a beautiful girl of about eighteen who had been transferred to my department. She was very efficient and did not seem to mix much with the others, nor enjoy their sometimes rather vulgar jokes. One day I got her to help me with a special job, which she did so well that I retained her personal services. To cut the story short I fell desperately in love with her, and have asked her to marry me. Although my love is returned, she refuses, saying she has no education—it is true she cannot speak grammatically—and that her people are all common labourers. Should I be wise to persist in this match?*

No—not if this is a case of passing glamour and physical attraction only. It is one thing to make love to this young girl in secret, but quite another to marry, set up home, and introduce her to your family and friends. Although you may be the least snobbish person in the world, it would grate upon your ears, as an educated man, to listen to badly phrased and ungrammatical speech all the time, and even more so in the presence of cultured acquaintances. Your pride would be put to some very severe tests and might not always stand the strain. You would also find it difficult to get a servant to show the proper respect for a mistress who had evidently little good breeding. Another snag would be the relatives, who, as deficient in education as your wife, might not always possess her good qualities. The situation would be further complicated if you had children.

As a rule, the most successful marriages are those in which both parties come from the same class of society and have similar social outlooks. But, having foreseen these difficulties, if you are still determined to marry the girl you might be able to persuade her to stay for a year or two with some sympathetic and tactful lady who would endeavour to prepare her for standards of living nearer your own. It would be very difficult to eradicate speech defects, but much could be done. In any case, provided your protégée does not lack courage, the efforts made on her part would show the measure of her love for you, and in these circumstances your future life together might well prove the wisdom of your choice.

### WHY DO MEN DROP ME ?

*I am a shy, unattractive woman of thirty-three, and yet I have known less attractive women make a huge success of life and marriage. I have had no lack of admirers, but having interested them to the point of "walking out" they then cool off and gradually fade away. After quite a number of these affairs, I decided to remain an old maid gracefully. But then he came, the man I had subconsciously waited for all my life. With his first kiss all loneliness and the repression of years seemed to be swept away. I worshipped him, and allowing my passion to*

*overwhelm me, kissed him unrestrainedly. Imagine my surprise when he was disgusted; I meant no wrong. I only loved him. But now he looks at me as though I were a creepy-crawly thing. So what confidence I had is gone, and now I can only look forward to an old age alone. What do you think about this miserable situation?*

Your last admirer was probably a man who had been singularly unfortunate in the women of his acquaintance, or else he had been brought up in a very narrow-minded household where he had been filled with outmoded ideas of what women should be like and how they should comport themselves. Up till the middle of Queen Victoria's reign the most widely read book on marriage stated that no woman of good breeding possessed any passionate feelings, and that it would be a "vile imputation" for a man to affirm the contrary. Where women have been obliged to hide their true natures and sternly repress themselves from the time of adolescence, they may give an impression of being cold and lacking in response. It will not be everyone who can arouse them from this seeming lethargy, though many would-be suitors may have tried. But when a lover comes along who really understands them, and has patience as well as "a way with him," he may have no cause to complain of newly awakened ardour.

Curiously enough, it is often the "cold" type of women who exercise the greatest attraction. The man scents a challenge here, and the more resistance he meets with the more assiduous his attentions. It is not always easy today to express one's natural feelings and be understood. Perhaps your nature is altogether too frank, and the men who have courted you have been accustomed to chicanery and posing, and have never been able to size you up. In your next "affair" give your suitor a run, and do not show your feelings quite so easily. He will likely enjoy "storming the fortress," and you will have learned one of the wiles of holding a man.

#### HOW CAN I WIN THE GIRL I LOVE ?

*You will call this a fool's letter, but honestly I feel all that I write about. I am simply crazy about a girl, and she is fond of me, but I know she does not consider me seriously. I have asked her—Can I court her with a view to marriage? She merely laughed, and said there was plenty of time to think about that. But I must have her definitely for myself; I hate the thought of her going around with other fellows. She is in my thoughts all the time and I want her badly. You'll perhaps say that my need is more physical than anything else, but although this enters my thoughts I am a decent fellow, I hope, and would never harm her. Please help me with your advice for I cannot concentrate on, or take an interest in, anything else at the moment.*

Reflect upon this : " A woman loves the kisses she cannot get," for there is a world of philosophy in that epigram. The best way to spoil any chance you may have with this girl is to show how utterly dependent you are upon her favours. When she sees your eagerness to fawn at her feet and eat from her hand, she may say pretty words to you to flatter you and hold you temporarily, but will also probably look round for someone else whose conquest will give her more thrill. You can be picked up any spare time when no other fish are biting. Your state of complete infatuation is understandable only by those who have had the same experience. But many of these would tell you that a year hence, you may be as indifferent to this charmer as to last year's calendar !

If you are bent upon making a conquest, your best course is to find out some way in which you can be useful to her. If she adores a certain film-star or actor, book good seats for that show and ask her to come with you. By keeping your eyes open and using tact, you may be able to secure advantages over less astute rivals. But it is fatal to show jealousy, for here you will only punish yourself. Furthermore, it is useless to despair if, despite all your efforts, your advances are turned down. There is one sovereign remedy then—indeed, the only one. Look out for another girl you can love, and you will be astonished to see how quickly the image of the first disappears.

### SHOULD NINETEEN MARRY TWENTY-NINE ?

*My boy is completely infatuated with a girl who is twenty-nine years of age. He is only nineteen. She is employed in the same firm as my son, and they are going out together regularly. The boy is apparently completely head over ears in love with her. My husband is very concerned and threatened " doing something about it." I should not worry so much if our son were the flighty sort, but he has been always very steady, and whilst I do not wish to be unkind to the girl, I am sure you will agree that a difference of ten years is far too much. Please let me have your opinion.*

This difference in years may not be so important as you imagine. You should remember there is a mental age as well as a physical one. That is to say, your boy, who seems not to be the least " flighty," may think in terms some years ahead of his contemporaries, and could be, in fact, as developed in some directions as a man ten years older. A woman of twenty-nine is still comparatively young, and if she has known how to take care of herself may be as fresh and attractive as many girls hardly out of their teens. Added to this, she has probably passed through the " kitten " stage and should have at her age a good deal of common sense. If your boy is of a nervous, dependent type, he may feel an element of stability

in his sweetheart which he fails to find in younger girls. This would give him courage and help him to appear at his best and do good work.

Many happy marriages have been contracted between lovers where there has been even greater difference in age between the woman and man than in the present instance. If this girl's general character meets with your approval, your husband would be unwise to interfere with this romance. He could, of course, point out to your son that, in the event of his marrying, the age disparity might be more noticeable, say, in twenty years' time; but it is to be doubted if this remote contingency would influence the young man's decision in any way.

### DO I REALLY LOVE MY FIRST SWEETHEART ?

*You may smile at my problem, but it is a serious one to me. I am a girl of twenty-two, and have always lived with my grandparents in a remote part of the country where I seldom met young people of my own age. Now, upon their death, I find myself in an occupation in a large town mixing with young people and joining in their social life. For about a month I have been walking out with a very nice boy. I can truthfully say he is my first sweetheart, if I can call him that, for I am not sure if I like him well enough yet to wish to marry him some day. That is my trouble. How does a girl know if she is really in love? Please do help me, if you can.*

When we try to think out *why* we love we may not be quite so much in love as we imagine ! For if a love is genuine, no amount of thought can quite discover its source. You appear to have had no previous experience of men and love-making, and in consequence cannot make useful comparisons like the average girl of your age with one or more flirtations to her credit. While you still remain in doubt as to your feelings, do not commit yourself too much. It will then be less difficult to part from your boy, if needs be. Meanwhile, there are a few ideas worth thinking over. There is a sort of love which might be called "calculated." For instance, one may like a certain person, and be happy in his or her company, and yet would feel no unbearable sense of loss if, for some reason, this friend disappeared. In the case of such a friendship developing into courtship, a girl might ask herself : "Will he be able to support me comfortably?" "Shall I continue to feel proud of his intelligence?" "Am I glad that no one else has managed to snatch him first?" If the answers are satisfying, marriage may prove quite harmonious; but the chances are it will miss the great transports of feeling which mark the more romantic attachments.

If one loves almost wholly with the heart, and not so much with the head, these questions seldom arise. It is a case of "all or nothing" when almost every time. This type of devotion can lead to the



heights of happiness—and depths of despair. But in love one must take risks as in every other great enterprise. When you feel that the loss of your friend would make such a blank in your life that you cannot imagine life without him, and that you are never happier than when doing something to make him happy, then you will know that you are really in love.

### OUGHT I TO MARRY A GIRL WHO HAS HAD AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD ?

*I have met a girl who is now thirty years of age; the same age as myself. I knew her many years ago when we were children and, since coming together again, have fallen in love with her. She reciprocates my feeling but there is a terrible rift in the lute. When the girl was about twenty she was betrayed by a man many years her senior. Her illegitimate child was adopted and no one now knows where it is. This sad experience has cast a dark shadow over my girl's life, and now we have become lovers the old affair is raked up again. Both my parents strongly disapprove of my association with her, fearing it will ruin my future. I do not agree, for I feel she will make a good wife and helpmate. What ought I to do ?*

If you feel that this girl is the only one you want to marry, you ought to disregard altogether any criticism based on the unfortunate experience of her youth. There is nothing more cruel or contemptible than raking up charges of this kind, and the people who do are both spiteful and venomous. Moreover, it is every man's duty to protect his wife from scandalmongers, and if you marry the girl you should set up your home some distance away, if that is at all practicable.

You would prove your courage, of course, if you decided to stay where you are and defy the full force of local public opinion; but even in the happiest circumstances there would come a time when the strain of the constant struggle would tell on your wife and affect her health and happiness, despite all her pleas to the contrary. Your own family's disapproval ought to make it easier to make the break from old surroundings and settle away from home—possibly overseas—while you are both young. Here you would be able to begin an entirely new life together—divorced from all the old unpleasant memories. If you are able to do this, you will have a much better chance of lasting happiness, although much here, too, depends on your personal characters.

### IS NINE YEARS TOO LONG TO KEEP COMPANY ?

*I am not formally engaged, but have been keeping company with a young man for nine years. The reason for this long courtship is that his wage is small and there seems little prospect*

*of any advancement for him. I am twenty-seven years of age and wonder should I let things drift any longer. I know that my young man is very fond of his own pleasures, and am quite certain that he has never saved a penny. He expects me to pay my share whenever we go out together and seldom buys me a present, though I have spent money freely on him. He says that he loves me, but sometimes by the way he treats me I am uncertain as to whether this is the truth. What do you advise?*

You would be well advised to bring matters to a head as soon as possible. Nine years "keeping company" is an abnormally long time, and as your lover has never given you a ring it seems almost as if he had little wish or intention of carrying out his implied agreement to marry you. Should he eventually do so, falling short of a complete change of character on his part, it is unlikely you would experience much happiness together. Lovers of this type centre all their interests upon themselves and make use of anyone willing to minister to their needs. As a rule, their characters are somewhat colourless and lack virility.

If you are prepared to share your life with this man it might be a good plan to suggest that instead of spending his money upon himself he should start a joint banking account with you (as a sign of his good intentions) with a view to setting up house at the earliest moment. A girl of your age who is known to have been walking out with a lover for nine years might have a difficulty in finding another sweetheart. This man's treatment of you has been most unjust and thoroughly selfish, and your continuance of the relationship is more of a tribute to your qualities than to his worth.

#### **GIRLS SOON BORE ME—WHAT IS WRONG ?**

*I have what may seem to you a strange confession to make. I often wonder if there are other young men situated like myself. I came of age a month ago and at present am courting a nice girl who seems very fond of me. I ought to tell you I have walked out with at least a dozen girls since I was seventeen. Every time I believed myself truly in love, but after a few weeks I did not seem to mind if I saw my sweetheart again or not, and thought I should be happier with some fresh face I had noticed. I am often called a flirt, but really I want to stand by one love and feel sure this would make me more contented. But the same old feeling is already coming upon me that I should not like to spend the whole of my life with my present girl, and I am wondering how I can tell her this without hurting her too much. Do you think I shall ever find my soul-mate?*

If you keep on looking for the ideal woman you will likely die an aged bachelor. At twenty-one you should begin to know your own

mind and be able to focus your affection to greater purpose. It is natural for the love of a very young man to embrace several of the opposite sex, for he is not so much on the look out for one particular partner as he is in need of *some* love object on which to centre his newly awakened interest. For a time he may have a number of flirtations and find them more or less amusing without being stirred himself to any degree. At the back of his mind is a fear of getting too involved and taking on an obligation he does not wish to fulfil. However, by the time the twenties are reached this "trial and error" habit of love-making should have come to an end.

You may be surprised to know you are lacking in courage and that your outlook is an entirely selfish one. You are still in the childish stage, wanting everything and expecting to give nothing in return. When you find one girl for whom you are prepared to die, so to speak, or at least feel more than willing to make any sacrifice on her behalf, you may at last begin to live—and love. Men of your type are liable to finish by despising and disparaging all women. But all the time the fault lies in the poverty of their own emotional make-up. A resolution on your part to go slowly, to see all the best points in your partner, and to watch out for your own weaknesses may lead you to discover something about love you have certainly missed as yet.

### IS IT WRONG FOR A GIRL TO LEAVE HOME ?

*I am thinking of leaving my home and going to live in a service flat, but before doing so would like your advice. I am an only daughter, twenty-two years of age, and I earn about £3 10s. 0d. weekly. I have a comfortable home, but my parents object to me bringing my boy friend there. The consequence is that I have to go out to see him always, either to his home, or to places of entertainment. This latter is often an expensive way of life for us two and since we cannot, at this stage, afford so much expenditure, I am determined to do something about it. With a flat of my own I could have my boy to see me frequently, and with no expense or trouble to anyone. Do you think I would be doing wrong in leaving my parents?*

You do not give reasons for your parents' objection to your lover. If they have nothing against his personal character it is unreasonable for them to forbid a girl of your age to bring a sweetheart to the house. Presumably you are not yet engaged; but if you are intending to marry it would be well to have a conventional recognition of your position before deciding to move from your home. Your parents' consent to your engagement is not necessary. On the salary you mention it is very doubtful if you could live in a service flat as economically as at home with any degree of comfort, even after making allowances for the money now spent on outside pleasures. For an

only child to break away from the home under these circumstances is a serious thing, and should not be done unless you have tried every means in your power to bring about an understanding with your family. If you begin married life with this cloud over you, it is not going to add to your happiness. An only girl stands in a special relationship to her mother and father. The truth of blood being thicker than water will probably be tested later on in ways which may not always meet with your husband's approval. However kind and considerate the husband, there are times when most married girls like to run to the old home for advice and sympathy. On the other hand, if it is a clear case of your parents being jealous and desirous of binding you to themselves, you should have no hesitation in enforcing your demand for freedom to live your own life. Home conditions under these circumstances are stifling.

It might be an excellent thing if you could induce someone who knows both your own and your boy friend's family to speak to your parents on your behalf. Even a temporary compromise of some sort, if in any way possible, might open the way to a happy solution of your problem.

## CHAPTER 8

### BECOMING ENGAGED

#### SUBSTITUTES FOR LOVE

It is a disappointing experience when a young man or woman becomes fond of someone, and hopes the affection will be returned, to find that the relationship never seems to get further. As long as the conversation is kept to things of general interest, there is plenty to talk about; but just as soon as the companion is given a gentle hint that there are other matters in the world much more absorbing, he or she is met by silence, and the talk finishes abruptly.

There are a number of young people apparently unable to become even moderately interested in love and its problems. With some of them, the girls more particularly, it is a case of retarded development. Later on, both physical and emotional growth will help to balance things up, and the lost ground will be regained. Other young adults seem to spend all their spare time at sports of some sort. Still another type are deeply interested in a hobby which excludes any other interest, and a few are so intent upon making good in their careers that nothing is allowed to interfere with their ambition. Most of us know of young people who have dedicated their lives to some special work. There are occupations both at home and abroad, in the mission and medical fields, where conditions are so

strenuous that a married couple would be at a severe disadvantage. Intrepid young adventurers volunteer for posts where they carry their lives in their hands. These jobs seem to provide a substitute for love and its transports, and to make the companionship of the opposite sex unnecessary.

Everybody has heard, too, of confirmed bachelors and old maids who seem quite self-sufficient and happy. Investigation of these people's lives would probably show they had turned deliberately away from love after some severe disappointment, or had never felt the need of a mate, or cared to undertake the responsibilities a marriage would entail. With many of the latter class a younger relative, perhaps a nephew or niece, is often the object of their affections, or they give their money and time to the advancement of some special cause. Only on one condition can this type remain healthy and happy; their attentions must never be centred exclusively upon themselves. When this happens, they soon become soured and "crusted" and their love, robbed of a normal outlet, turns inward and makes them selfish and unsociable.

### SHOULD FLIRTING BE ALLOWED ?

Those who want to swim well must first enter the water a number of times, and should never be afraid of swallowing a mouthful now and again. The only way for young men and women to find out if they are suited to each other is to keep company. However great the attraction of a handsome face and seductive smile, there must be an exploration of character before any real knowledge of a lover is acquired. A youth who shows the best side of his nature when everything is going well may easily disappoint by displaying anger or impatience at the first sign of difficulty. The "sweetest girl on earth" may be exceedingly petty and even "cattish" when her nerves become frayed. It is just such "eye-openers" as these which tell the quality of the patience, restraint and power of accommodation a young person possesses. There are some girls who like to keep a suitor waiting without apology to see what his reactions will be. There are youths who tease their sweethearts by pretending to be fond of other girls. But without resorting to such a deliberate catch, there should be plenty of opportunities for lovers to discover if their tastes and inclinations are likely to clash. Flirting is natural and should not be condemned when it is a real attempt to explore the possibility of becoming genuine lovers. It comes under suspicion when there is never any serious intention behind it, when it serves only to pass the time and to procure a little cheap excitement—very often at the cost of another. It can be definitely harmful when it takes the place of genuine love and this may easily happen if it is persisted in too long.

Young men and women who have had numerous shallow affairs



may come to look upon the opposite sex merely as opportunity for another intrigue destined to end in the same way as the rest. Reverence and respect, the only enduring bond between the sexes, may easily be lost in the course of numerous flirtations. The flirt will be always looking for a chance to catch his partner out, and whatever passing pleasure he may get will be weakened by the knowledge that sincerity is lacking and that the end is already in sight. There are some natures incapable of concentrating on any single love. These "butterflies" settle nowhere for long, and unsettle many a victim. A man or woman who thinks to have captured a prize in becoming engaged to a notorious flirt may well be doomed to disappointment.

### WHEN SHOULD LOVERS BECOME ENGAGED ?

This problem is an anxious and difficult one for many couples, although at first sight the answer seems obvious. It is right for lovers to become engaged, firstly, when both look forward to their wedding with joy and eagerness, impatient for the time to arrive when they may begin a new life together; and, secondly, when the man's financial position is such that marriage is a practical possibility within a year or eighteen months. Long engagements—except in circumstances where the fiancé has to go on foreign service—are undesirable for several reasons. In the first place, an event that has been anticipated for too long tends to lose the edge of its attraction. However great the mutual affection, man cannot live always at the same high tension, and hope constantly deferred may easily lead to a feeling of impatience and discontent. Engaged couples who see each other frequently, and have no prospect of marrying for some years, are called upon to exercise an amount of restraint which places a heavy toll upon the nervous system. They may be subjected to temptations which, if yielded to, can react unfavourably upon the girl, especially if she is highly strung or has a tendency to hysteria or neurosis. It is also best for the parents on both sides to express their approval of the engagement, for this will make for a happy relationship all round.

### THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MARRIAGE

Finally, the young couple should ask themselves if they are willing to undertake to the full the responsibilities which a wedded life must bring to both. They should not forget that, although marriage makes one of two, it also makes two of one, and that each partner will have at least one other life in his care in addition to his own. This is sometimes rather a terrifying thought to the fearful lover who has never been fully convinced of his ability to guide his own life, and accounts for many of the matches which are broken off at the very last moment. Some couples, without any prospect of

marriage, become engaged because one of them is over-anxious to have an official seal put upon the pact. Often the fear exists here that the partner may be tempted to stray, with jealousy and possessiveness as the principal motives. Young women who have never given a thought to the serious side of marriage get engaged just to be able to flourish a ring and crow over their rivals; they are quite insincere about it and are only pandering to their own vanity.

On the other hand, when both partners are sincere and have considered the problem from every angle, engagement should not be delayed long, for it gives a girl a recognized social position and makes matters easier for her in many ways.

### ARE SECRET ENGAGEMENTS ADVISABLE ?

"Yes, darling, I will consent to our being engaged if you will make me a solemn promise *to tell no one in the world!* If a living soul even suspected our secret that would spoil everything for me." This is quite a common request, made for the most part by sentimental young women who feel that the announcement of an engagement is not sufficiently romantic in itself, and need something more to satisfy their craving for superiority. They generally believe that this element of secrecy will enable them to enjoy the situation twice over, for besides rejoicing in the knowledge of an official bond, they will be able to gloat over the way their friends are being hoodwinked. At the bottom of this attitude, whether it is conscious or not, are greed and selfishness. They want to squeeze the last drop of spurious romance from the situation and, thinking only of themselves, rob their fiancés of their rightful pride and pleasure in making the engagement public. This is a type of girl who likes to eat her cake and have it too, and there is a very real danger that this tendency will show itself in married life, and, meeting with strong resistance then, it can easily lead to quarrels and unhappiness.

By placing both parties in a false position, secret engagements often lead to dishonesty and generally to all kinds of embarrassing situations. Of course, there are occasions when prudence and common sense will necessitate a secret engagement, but at the earliest moment the affair should be made public. A girl should be very sure of her lover before assenting to a demand for secrecy from him. It is essential that she should both understand and appreciate his motive for secrecy, and make him realize that if she were deserted later, for any reason, it would be difficult to get witnesses to prove that any binding form of agreement had existed.

### OVERCOMING PARENTS' OPPOSITION

The young man or girl who gets engaged in the face of family opposition on either side is laying up trouble for the future. Sometimes, however, a jealous mother is furious at the thought of her son



*is one of life's great moments for any young couple when they tell their families of their engagement. Though it is often a shock—and not always welcome one—families should try to be sympathetic and greet the new member with every kindness.*

being "stolen" from her by a designing girl. She will see nothing but evil in her, and no argument or pleading will make her see the situation in a reasonable light. If he tries, for example, to bring his sweetheart home, his mother's studied coolness or half-veiled insults may prejudice the girl against that house for ever. In the same way, a jealous possessive father occasionally resents his daughter's friendship for a man. No one is good enough for her, he wants to imply; she has always belonged to him and he will not let her go. When the youth comes timidly to ask permission to be engaged, he may be met with some such criticism as: "You'll never be in a position to keep her," or "My daughter could make a really good match, if she chose." It is scarcely surprising here if the lover's pride is wounded and he takes a violent prejudice against his father-in-law.

If, despite such discouragement, the marriage does take place, there is still one very real danger. However much man and wife may love each other, and however they try to be loyal, the parents cannot be entirely shut out from their home, except under very special circumstances, and it would be foolish for either to insist that a blood relation should be ignored. This leads to many of the most difficult problems in married life and is dealt with thoroughly later. Here, all that it is necessary to say is that every effort should be made to bring about a compromise of some sort before marriage if only for the partner's sake, as a settlement now, even if only temporary, might lead to a fuller understanding in the future. If even a state of neutrality can be observed, this is well worth striving for. The biggest and most likely bid for reconciliation will be made when in course of time the young people take the first grandchild to be admired!

### THE MEANING OF LOVERS' QUARRELS

The well-known story of the lunatic who liked to hit his head with a hammer because it was so pleasant when he left off is matched by accounts of lovers who seem to pick quarrels for the sake of the joy they experience when matters are put right again. No two normal young people, married or unmarried, can spend long periods in each other's company without occasional differences of opinion. It is unusual, however, for well-bred people to lose such control of themselves that they bandy angry words and rude remarks. It cannot be denied that a "row" sometimes clears the air, and provided that real love exists it does little harm and the combatants soon kiss and make up, feeling all the happier for the incident. But it is an entirely different matter when lovers find some pretext for quarrelling at almost every meeting. Here it is extremely doubtful whether they are really suited to each other, for it would seem to be a case of opposing and clashing temperaments. One



fact is clear : both young people are still small children so far as their emotional development is concerned—and self-centred children at that—without the courage to play an adult rôle. If they really loved one another, there would be no need to make a stand for their own rights as soon as they scented a challenge; instead, they would listen patiently to the other's point of view. Their constant quarrels prove that hatred enters largely into their relationship, although they would probably be shocked at the thought. It is easy to foresee that if they marry, more problems than ever will meet and, most likely, floor them.

Critical, accusing natures, however passionate they may be in some respects, make bad husbands and wives. They usually say the wrong thing at the right moment—when the trail of powder is waiting to be fired ! The one hope for this type of lover is that he or she recognizes this weakness in their character and makes a determined effort to reform. It will not be easy. It is a case of studying what to say and what not to say. A good rule is to limit conversation for a time and to weigh each word before it is spoken and it would probably be best to postpone marriage for a time until he or she sees some real effort at improvement in their mate.

### IMPORTANCE OF AN ENGAGEMENT RING

"Is not an engagement ring a badge of servility? Does it not show that the fiancé 'owns' the girl?" This is the sort of question some modern girls are asking. They have no objection to their engagement being known, but see no need to wear an advertisement of the fact. Most fiancées, however, think exactly the opposite and consider the ring a precious symbol of the honour which has come to them. Every time they glance at their hand their feelings of personal worth are enhanced, and they delight in showing the ring to their friends and hear its merits praised. The first type of fiancée is generally what is known as a "strong-minded" girl. She has definite ideas of her own about the equality of the sexes, and leaps to arms the moment she believes that the male is trying to assert his superiority. She may be perfectly sincere, and, of course, is entitled to her views, but her dislike of wearing an engagement ring will possibly extend to a refusal to wear a wedding one. In this case, it may easily lead to some unfortunate problems later. Such a girl will be lucky if she finds a husband equally anxious to defend the position she has taken up. At first he may be proud of being associated with "a woman who knows her own mind," but unless he discovers that his wife is just as zealous in seeing that *his* rights as a man are not overlooked, the way will be opened for endless disputes over "mine and thine."

An engagement ring, which is usually treasured for many years, should be worthy of its owner, and a fiancé would be wise to spend



as much as he can possibly afford on it. A few extra pounds spent now should yield a handsome return over a very long period and bring happiness for a lifetime.

Lovers who live in the same town, or within easy distance of each other, escape the difficulties and pitfalls which test the man and woman who are separated by long distances, and only able to meet infrequently. When two young people are deeply in love, and have all their interests and ambitions centred upon their future home, loneliness is not always so noticeable. Letters are exchanged every few days and eagerly awaited. This correspondence is a vital link in the love relationship and can often do as much as, or more than, the spoken word to cement the affections. A sensitive lover will note any change in the tone of a letter and grieve, or be glad, at its message. Not every lover can express himself graphically in writing, but even the shortest of genuine notes can contain a warmth of feeling sometimes lacking in long and rambling epistles. The lover who is irregular with his correspondence, or makes excuses for not writing at all, may be well-intentioned; but, as a rule, he will be found to study his own convenience rather than the welfare of his fiancée.

### DOES ABSENCE MAKE THE HEART GROW FONDER ?

This period of enforced separation may prove in the end to have been the real test of love. It will show whether the lovers still believe there is only one mate in the world for them and that life without this partner would be dull, blank and meaningless, despite any number of worldly attractions. On the other hand, with the passing of the weeks the image of the sweetheart may become blurred, and the couple, who thought themselves genuinely in love when they were together, begin to realize that they are not experiencing any real pangs at separation, and maybe even have already found some quite acceptable substitute who has made them quickly forget how much their old fiancée once meant to them.

An engaged young man ought to be proud of his sweetheart, and not only have her photograph with him but speak of her to his friends and acquaintances. While he is away he should try to arrange for his fiancée to visit him, and so enable her to get to know his friends and the conditions under which he works. This mental picture should help her considerably upon her return home. The hardest of tests is when the fiancé leaves for foreign service with no prospect of returning for several years. If both he and his sweetheart are young, they will be developing mentally and emotionally during this time. The problem is, Will they be growing nearer to, or apart from, each other? In many cases it would be fairer for both parties not to enter into any formal engagement until at least the half of the period of absence had expired. To sum up, it can be said that an

absence which is not too prolonged, generally tends to draw two *genuine* lovers closer together, but fickle or uncertain lovers will probably fall in love with the first attractive face they meet.

### THE DISCUSSION OF OLD LOVES

Most young men and women who meet for the first time in their twenties have already enjoyed one or more flirtations, and may even have been previously engaged. When at last they meet the person they really want to marry, a difficult problem arises : Should they tell of their past love affairs or not? The answer to this problem must depend entirely upon the type of person to whom it is to be told. If he or she is broadminded, and so sure of the love of the mate that nothing which may be told is likely to change this affection, then confession will involve little risk and should be made. If, on the other hand, the fiancé is of a jealous and possessive temperament, he may pretend to have had a claim on the partner almost from the cradle, and be furious at the mention of any interloper who has dared to approach his "property." "Let sleeping dogs lie" is often sound advice for lovers who see no reason to discuss what is past and over. However truthful and innocent the details may be, there is no guarantee that in a moment of exasperation an angry partner—perhaps even years afterwards—will not make some foolish charge based upon a misinterpretation of the facts. In his anger he may condemn his wife as if she had just been guilty of some deceit or unfaithfulness.

### FRANKNESS IS BEST

It is the suspicious, jealous characters who are the more eager to probe into old love affairs. The more they are told the more they believe is still being concealed from them. Their catechizing may be endless and has only one object—to prove the partner's inferiority. A really happy couple are so content with their lot that there is no desire to discuss "have beens." It seems to them that every event in their lives has led up only to this, and that looking backwards is a waste of time. There are some men and women, however, who feel a pressing need to open their hearts to their mates about the past. It is not unusual for a girl to broach the subject after a very short acquaintance. For instance, there may be incidents which, if divulged by another person, might be a severe shock to the partner and undermine his belief in the other's integrity. When there has been a previous engagement or marriage, a breach of promise, a divorce, or an "affair" of any sort, it is better to divulge the fact at an early stage of the friendship, rather than live under the constant fear of exposure. An excellent rule for both parties is to agree that once the past has been told, and questions asked and answered satisfactorily, the subject should never be mentioned again.

### IS IT WISE TO HOLIDAY TOGETHER ?

All lovers dream of the time when they will be able to be together without the presence and possible interference of other people. Even under the happiest conditions there are sure to be occasional obstacles to complete privacy. The prospect of a holiday together away from the usual haunts is then a great attraction. A week or a fortnight in new surroundings promises so many delights that both are equally eager for the moment of departure. Strange to say, these trips together do not always fulfil their early promise, and it is not unusual for couples to return with half-concealed feelings of disappointment. Why should this be so? A holiday of this sort, when not undertaken in the company of friends or spent with relatives, has some of the aspects of a honeymoon. Throughout the day the couple are inseparable, and stimulated by the unusual conditions romance runs high. Life is lived at high tension, and unless a certain standard of conduct is agreed from the start there will be inevitable temptations. Behaviour which would not be tolerated at home is apt to be modified in a complete change of environment. Should there be any lapse from the accepted standards, regret on the part of one or both lovers may follow, and this can easily lead to feelings of depression and disappointment, especially on the part of the woman.

Even honeymooners may get a trifle bored from spending day after day in each other's company in places where there is little opportunity for entering into any social life, and *they* are accorded many privileges denied to an engaged couple. When nerves are tense and feelings stifled, occasional little outbursts of irritation are hardly surprising. Sweethearts on holiday together should always bear this in mind. Perhaps the most satisfactory holiday for an engaged couple is one spent away with a mixed company of friends. While securing ample opportunity for private walks and talks, this generally manages to spread the interests and provide a healthy outlet for emotion.

### WHO SHOULD PAY FOR PLEASURE OUTINGS ?

No lover likes to appear mean in his sweetheart's eyes, and, in an effort to impress by his generosity, he will often spend more than he can afford. When not carried to excess, this is a fault "on the good side," for the fiancé who counts every penny is not likely to satisfy his wife's demands for little luxuries when they come to settle down. Girls, by keeping their eyes open, can sometimes learn a great deal about a man's character by the way he spends—or saves—his money. Both the fearful and courageous side of his nature, as well as his powers of discretion, can be judged—often surprisingly accurately—by observing the way he guards his money and on what things he spends it.

When an engaged couple are planning their home they will fix upon the amount of capital required. This will have to be saved and economies must be made, so that it would be unfair to expect the fiancé to pay for two on every occasion. In going to cinemas, theatres or dance-halls, or in making excursions at week-ends, each should contribute a fair share of the expenses. This is not to say that the man should never propose a special treat or offer to stand a birthday celebration. This he should be glad to do now and again, if it gives his fiancée pleasure, and in the case of the girl who perhaps keeps house, and has little spare cash of her own, he should expect to contribute much more to their pleasures.

One of two things may happen if the fiancée is a spendthrift or a "gold-digger." The lover, afraid of appearing mean, may spend all his earnings on pleasure and have to postpone the wedding for an indefinite time or run into debt. Or, foreseeing this danger, he may take fright and close up his purse-strings tightly. In the latter case the girl might misunderstand his motive and by hints and unfair criticism make this very unpleasant. Frankness in money matters says best. When each has an exact knowledge of the other's financial position, there should be no unjust demands.

### WHAT BEING LOYAL MEANS

"Of course, now that we are engaged, you won't speak to that fellow X——, and you will tell Y—— off, if he has the cheek to offer you a lift in his bus" . . . "I shan't expect you to see Gladys to the station if you have to work late at the office, and you will never think of asking her sister to play your accompaniments for you again." Such difficulties as these often arise between engaged couples, who imagine they have now got proprietary rights over their partner. What this type demands is a closed society of two, with "no trespassers" written large so that all the world may be warned. Their idea of enforcing loyalty is to cut the partner off from the chance of meeting any individual of the opposite sex who might be at all pleasing. In fact, they are so conscious of the insufficiency of their own charms that they grudge the slightest friendly word that their partner may bestow on another. This is a clear case of selfishness and self-love rather than real devotion, for it has been said that a lover is in love with all the world, and in a case of real affection this is generally the case, for both the lovers are only too anxious to be on friendly terms with everybody.

It is the height of stupidity for either lover to put selfish restrictions on the other's freedom of action. This attitude may seem at first to be a sign of the love and care and pride in the partner, but as soon as the least suspicion is aroused the "love" can turn to recrimination. Of course, there is a code of honour to be observed by an engaged couple and some obligations should never be neglected. A fiancé,

for example, should not compromise himself by paying marked attention to another girl, or go out of his way to give her favours when she could be as easily served by somebody else. A fiancée on the other hand, should never show too great a pleasure in the company of another man or try obviously to attend dances and social gatherings where she knows old "flames" will be present. But soon as stupid suspicions lead to serious and unfounded charges or suggestions of rigid rules of conduct, it is evident there is something radically wrong with the match. A sincere love implies confidence in the partner's motives and the desire to do nothing which may hurt his feelings. This is no guarantee, of course, that a lover will never be tempted by some sexual attraction—this possibility will always remain—but there is less likelihood of it being dangerous if he or she has an ideal they do not want to disturb.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### SHOULD ONE MARRY OUT OF PITY ?

*I am in a very difficult position and would appreciate your help. Two years ago I began walking out with a fine girl of eighteen and was really very much in love. We were extremely happy for about a twelve-month and then another fellow came upon the scene. My girl did not exactly throw me over, but intimated she cared for this man as much as for me, and expressed her intention of seeing him at times. For six months I suffered the hellish pangs of jealousy. Then, when motoring with this man, my girl met with a serious accident. She was in bed for four months and the doctors say she can never be strong again. The other man has disappeared, and she says all her love is now for me. Ought I to think of marrying her in these circumstances? I pity her from the bottom of my heart.*

A great thinker once wrote : " Pity is the hurt of love." If you marry this girl out of pity you may well have cause later to regret the sacrifice you have made. It is a terrible misfortune for a young man when a healthy wife becomes permanently invalided. It means that he is deprived of many sources of well-being, health and happiness and will have to subject himself to a stern self-discipline, if life is to be bearable at all. Have you considered carefully what it will mean to have a wife who can never share in most of your activities and who may be incapable of bearing you healthy children? You must always remember that marriage is a lifetime job, and handicaps which may be endurable for a time, become hopeless fetters when stretched over a long period. You may well be a young man with ideals, and one of them, perhaps, is chivalry, but this is a mistaken conception of it. Life has to be lived on a realistic basis, and romance



must always be balanced by clear, sane action. This girl is still young, and proper rest, combined with skilled treatment, may bring about a great improvement in her condition. Your best plan here is to make no rash offers of marriage, until this improvement is obvious and has lasted for some time. If the girl really thinks as much of your happiness as she does of her own, she will not want anything else.

### IS IT SAFE TO MARRY A BAD-TEMPERED MAN ?

*The man I am to marry has an ungovernable temper, though he has not displayed it before me. But his sisters tell me that he is terrible when crossed, and he has himself admitted to me that when angry he "sees red." I could, of course, regard the matter lightly, but on the other hand is it not possible that his anger is so uncontrollable that it might wreck our married life? Should I take the chance of this, in the hope that I would serve, in my capacity of a dutiful mate, to keep my husband's tempers always on an even keel? I love him deeply—he is a splendid man, as I know him. But I know of homes wrecked by temper. What do you advise?*

Your qualification "as I know him" is significant. Your fiancé would naturally be on his best behaviour when he is with you, at least before his marriage. But what do his associates think of him? Have you troubled to get another opinion? A "bad temper" is not a defect one can isolate from his personality. It is a sign of a selfish nature, a retarded emotional development, and a desire to override every opposing or contradictory will. There is a big difference between a hot-blooded, impetuous individual, and a bad-tempered man. The former can make mistakes, but he is usually the first to recognize them, to apologize and make amends. It is not unusual for this type to be extremely generous. A bad-tempered man is usually to some extent vicious, sullen and revengeful. He creates an "atmosphere" about him which may be very disturbing to any sensitive person. He rarely jokes, cannot stand a joke against himself, and is always on the alert lest one should take a "rise" out of him. In short this type of person is still a child emotionally. Unless your lover's character undergoes a radical change you must expect wide variations of behaviour in marriage; often indeed you may have to cope with the fretfulness of a naughty child who cannot have everything it wants.

It is, of course, a possibility that your fiancé's ill-temper is the result of an internal physical trouble, digestive or otherwise. You might, tactfully, suggest this to him, adding that a medical overhaul might conceivably cure his tempestuous outbreaks. Also, if it is possible, persuade him to restrain his moods for some time before beginning wedded life; put him on probation, so to speak. A parent of

“ungovernable temper” would be a serious menace to the welfare of your children. In marriage, you must take a long view and not allow your future to be jeopardized by any weak sentiment as to what a “dutiful mate” could do. People who lose all control of themselves are neither helped nor improved by pandering or weak submission.

### SHOULD ONE MARRY WHEN PASSION SEEMS LACKING ?

*I am to marry within a few months, and would like to be advised as to my future life with the girl of my choice. You see, she is somewhat cold of nature. Not in regard to her feelings for people, but in expressing them. When we have kissed, hers is a kiss that might have been given by a child to its mother. There seems to be a lack of passion in her nature and, though I do not want it to be assumed that “passion” is my one thought, it does appear to me that possibly married life founded on a “cold” basis is likely to be difficult. On the other hand, is there any hope that marriage will change her in this respect ?*

If you have known your fiancée for some long time and have never exchanged embraces of a more passionate nature than you describe, she is either indifferent to your kisses, or else is suffering from some form of repression. But, as you state she is not lacking in affection for people, the latter condition is more likely to be the case. It would be helpful to know something of her upbringing and her relationship to her parents. If she comes from a puritanical home, any reference of hers to sex and its problems may have been suppressed, or she may have been taught to look upon any display of feelings as “immodest and unladylike.” It is almost incredible how ignorant some young women are of physiology, and how full of ludicrous fears—some even believing, for example, that they will become pregnant if they are kissed.

Moreover, it is possible that you may not have heard how averse some women are to any display of physical passion during courtship. This is a peculiar trait that many a lover finds it hard to understand and forgive.

Your best plan is to have a frank talk with your fiancée. Do so in a way that will not offend her susceptibilities, but do not be satisfied until you discover her fundamental mental attitude. If she confesses that this side of marriage has no attraction for her, reconsider your position; that is, if you set great value upon a responsive partner. Marriage to a really frigid woman can easily become a tragedy. On the other hand, your fiancée may summon enough courage to make a confidant of you and you can help her to dispel her fears with sympathy and understanding. If the “coldness” is not inborn and you are really tender and patient, the difficulty should pass and her character change, but this will undoubtedly take time. Quite

Frankly, as you describe it, this is not a case where prudery will pay and you should try and come to a clear understanding as soon as possible.

### WHO SHOULD CHOOSE THE ENGAGEMENT RING ?

*My boy and I had our first quarrel over the engagement ring. He asked what was my choice, and when I told him what I would like, he said he would get the ring for me. I urged that I should be with him when he bought the ring, but he wouldn't hear of this arrangement. He said that it was "out of order" and the man always bought the ring alone. . . . I didn't like this arrangement, but he would not alter his decision. Now, though I have a very nice ring, I still think I should have chosen it myself. It would be of interest to me—and to others, I am sure—to know what is the correct procedure in this matter. Will you kindly inform me on this point?*

It is usual for the girl to visit the jeweller with her fiancé and to choose her own ring. In special circumstances a selection of rings can be sent to the house. Getting engaged is a big event in a girl's life, and the excitement of trying on various rings and making a decision is a part of the ceremony few girls would like to miss. It is possible that your fiancé had some special motive for not giving you the pleasure of making a choice yourself. He may have felt too shy to shop with you, or he might have foreseen some difficulty about the price he would be asked to pay. There are two ways of getting over this last problem. Lovers can either settle on a price limit in advance, or, if the fiancé thinks this would take the edge off the romance, he should have a preliminary word with the jeweller about the quality of rings he is to display.

There are occasions when a fiancé comes into possession of a special ring, perhaps a family heirloom or an exceptionally fine one, acquired at a bargain price, which he wants his sweetheart to wear, but this is an exception. For the most part a girl likes to have a new ring and know its whole history.

### SHOULD A LOVER TAKE LIBERTIES ?

*The young man to whom I am engaged is a fellow of much charm, but now and again he has been a little removed from the ideal. Often, when he calls upon me, there is no one at home but myself, and he stays for hours, which pleases me very much, since we can discuss all the things a to-be-married couple would want to consider. But there are moments when the position is difficult, for me as well as for him. He, I maintain, should see to it that there should be no "slipping" from standards; but he has on one or two occasions made suggestions that, although I am very much in love with him, I have resisted. It will happen again, I know,*

*and I am not sure of being always proof against a lover's pleading.  
Do help me with your advice.*

There is more than one way of looking at this widespread problem. There are many people who condemn any approach to intimacy before marriage very strongly, basing their strictures on either religious or moral grounds, but it may be more helpful if the subject is treated here from a strictly psychological point of view, although in the end the results tally more than one would have believed. It is quite natural that two young genuine lovers should be strongly attracted physically. Something would be wrong with the relationship if this were not so. But it must be remembered that life should be looked upon as a whole, and that the sex element, although extremely important, is but one part of experience. If thoughts of sex are allowed to fill the mind to the exclusion of almost everything else, the general balance will be upset, and disharmony in some form will appear. An unthinking young man may see in a particular girl not so much an individual who has a perfect right to a life of her own, but merely an object of sexual desire. The girl for her part may not regard the lover as her future husband, who will have to play an honoured role both in the home and in the world, if he is to be worthy of his man's estate, but simply as a male to minister to her pleasure. For the most part, however, it must be said that a woman usually takes a much longer view and is not so easily carried away by the impulse of the moment as a man.

It is dangerous and often presumptuous to dogmatize about sex, and it is quite impossible to reason with men or women who are no longer masters of their own emotions. At these times the rules which society has imposed are liable to be swept aside in a torrent of desire. These matters should be thought over in quiet moments when reason has a fair chance of a hearing. The average young man of decent upbringing wants at all times to appear chivalrous in the eyes of his girl, and he will think twice before doing anything which may cause her to lower her estimate of him. His intuition tells him that the regard he had lost would not be compensated for adequately by any "favours" he might be granted under stress. Again, the element of mystery plays a far bigger role than is suspected in most love affairs. A young lover who presumes upon his right as an accepted fiancé to take liberties with his partner is spoiling, if he only knew it, a very fine thing. In anticipating his married privileges he is making of his wedding day not so much the one great event of his life, but just an ordinary occasion without any outstanding reason for getting enthusiastic about it. His wife is already known to him emotionally and physically, and his life will proceed in much the same way as before, except that now he will have added responsibilities and expenses to bear. In other words, he will not have the same urge to push on with the preparations for his home,

the lover who has used his intelligence and his powers of restraint. There is another error into which a reckless lover can fall. If love is to be an art and provide the fullest satisfaction it must have times and seasons, and above all, be freed from anxiety and any element of haste or disharmony. It is almost impossible for furtive love to comply fully with these conditions, and as a consequence lovers who overstep the bounds of convention may suffer considerable disappointment and even be led to reproach each other. It would be folly not to admit that an ardent lover has special problems of his own. During the wooing, he has to take the lead and show his mastery in order to impress the girl and win her consent to be his wife. But, having done this, he is required to drop that imperative side of his nature and study the desires and well-being of his fiancée instead of his own physical demands.

It is interesting to note that sex psychologists are almost of one mind in asserting that an unmarried young man or woman can very largely transmute passion and keep it well under control by occupying their minds in study, or in dwelling upon the practical things they want to see furthered in their own world or in their future home. Lovers with ideals, determined to make their married lives a success in so far as they are able, will find often that the presence of their loved one is a sufficient stimulant in itself, and there will be little need to bring any strong inhibiting thought to bear. Admitted that the sexual code of an engaged couple is their own concern, the arguments outlined here are well worth the consideration of all who desire success in marriage.

#### MY GIRL IS CRITICAL—WILL THAT SPOIL OUR MARRIAGE ?

*I have been keeping company with a young lady for the past six months. We are both twenty-two and seem to have many tastes in common, although her views are perhaps more advanced than mine, and she is highly critical. For instance, when I wore what I considered quite a nice waistcoat at a party, she greeted me with: "Hullo, rag-bag! Did you think we were going to play charades?" She also half-ridiculed my efforts to sing, and made me feel rather small. It is true my girl is always spoken of as clever, but I am wondering if a greater show of sympathetic feeling at times would not be a bigger asset in marriage. What do you think?*

A girl who makes a man feel small before other people is lacking in true love feeling. If her real thoughts could be expressed she would say: "Look at that ninny, and see how fine and intelligent I am in comparison!" There is a certain type of woman who will seize upon any opportunity to start an argument with her lover, and will be annoyed if he does not give way! If they are playing a competitive game, she must not be beaten, or she will reproach him in



some way. "First this time and all the time!" is her slogan. Needless to say a big streak of jealousy will be also apparent. If she should suspect her sweetheart of taking the slightest interest in another girl, for example, she will sulk or quarrel straightway. The chances are there will come a time when you will resent too outspoken and unfair criticism. Most women like to "improve" their men, but if they really desire to hold their love they should try to make them appear their best. In the course of a hard business day a man will have to take knocks of all sorts, and it is little consolation to come home to a wife who has nothing but criticism to offer. Failing a great change of attitude on the part of your present girl you had better look about for a more accommodating partner if you want peace in your married life.

### HOW CAN A LOVER PROVE HIS WORTH ?

*I am grieved because my people do not seem to understand my fiancé. My father has always worked hard with his hands and, I am afraid, has not much sympathy with a thinker—and my future husband is certainly that. At present he is an insurance agent, but says he is hoping for a better situation, and will soon have one if things go right. During the past two years he has been a canvasser, political agent, mail-order dealer and one or two other things; never sticking to any job for long. He is a great student, and has some wonderful ideas for helping the world. Unfortunately he is always hard up, and I see little prospect of marrying yet, but I feel sure he will make good when he gets his chance. How can I persuade my people to my own opinion of him?*

You will certainly have difficulty in doing this, until your fiancé shows he is more a master of circumstances than seems to be the case at present. Your father may remember the saying, "Talk is cheap" and, as a practical man, scorn any one who fails to bring his ideas down to earth. There are ambitious types with a craving to make a good impression, but who lack the stamina and will-power to carry anything through. The bigger their failure the more magnificent their *next* effort is going to be. They are always fooling themselves—and their credulous friends—that success is just round the corner. The man who will rave for an hour about a grandiose scheme he has thought out for ending war and bringing about universal peace, will often shrink from an endeavour to put matters right between two quarrelsome neighbours.

The man whose whole energy is bent upon making the most of his present job, has neither time nor vitality to waste on speculating about the future. People who are always living in the next week, do so to escape the inconveniences and duties of the present day. You should tell your fiancé you expect him to find *and keep* a suitable

job as soon as possible. When he has given some proof of greater stability for a year or two, your father may begin to change his opinion, and your wedding may be appreciably nearer.

### WHO COMES FIRST—MOTHER OR SWEETHEART ?

*I am twenty-four years of age and have been home alone with my mother for the past nine years. I have been keeping company with a girl who is my ideal, but who has never met mother. This is because when my sweetheart was younger she was fond of a gay time, but now she is everything to be desired. When I was ill my mother went out of the house rather than meet my girl when she called. We want to get married and are willing to have mother live with us, but mother won't hear of the suggestion. I don't like to leave her as she is getting on in years and could not live on the small allowance I could make her. My brother seems to be quite indifferent. I am torn between my girl and my mother and the position is untenable. Do please advise me.*

A son who has never lived apart from his mother, and is her sole support, is placed often in an unenviable position when he wants to marry and set up a home of his own. The mother by this time may have come to believe that she has proprietary rights, and resent any other woman coming between her and her boy. This is an extremely selfish attitude to adopt, for it means that she denies him a life of his own and demands that she alone shall be the object of his care. At such a time any excuse is seized upon to belittle the girl and to make her appear unworthy. It is for you to make a choice between your mother and your sweetheart. As soon as you are satisfied that your mother's wants will be supplied, you should tell her at once of your decision to marry. On no account invite her to live with you, for that would be the shortest cut to unending trouble. In the present instance, there will have to be sacrifices all round for a time. You and your wife will have to live as modestly as possible—perhaps she could do some work which would help with the expenses—whilst your mother, assisted by you, might find a home with some relative or friend. In any case, whatever you do, your marriage will be a bitter pill for her to swallow; but once you have done your best to arrange for her future, you need have no qualms about going forward with your own plans. The first woman in your life will and must be your wife.

### SHOULD LOVERS HAVE THE SAME BELIEFS ?

*I am very much in love with a young man who runs a lending library in our town. One day when I was in his shop he said he would like me to read a certain book he prized greatly. I was distressed to discover this work was by a foreign author, and was bitter against all churches and religion. I was brought up*



*Torn between her home ties and her love. A girl has a difficult choice to make when she is faced with the alternative of putting off her marriage indefinitely or leaving an invalid parent who depends on her for support. Such situations unless courageously handled, may blight three lives.*

*strictly, have always attended church and am a choir member, and I told him quite frankly that I thought the book detestable. Nothing more was said about it at the time. Now, after walking out with my friend for six months, he wants to become engaged, but says he will not get married at a church, nor attend one, nor wish me to; and if we have children will forbid them to have any religious instruction. Do you think I should marry a man with these views?*

o; that is to say, unless your own views on this matter are likely to undergo a complete change. Your friend is evidently more than different to religion; he is even hostile, and would go out of his way to impose his ideas upon others. In a happy marriage, the partners should have much the same outlook upon things of major importance, and, in any case, should not make their differences of opinion a reason for quarrelling. The husband should never think of forcing his viewpoint down his partner's throat, or of using threats to get his own way.

Religious beliefs—or disbeliefs—can affect a life fundamentally and influence every act. If you married this man, you would probably feel that you were pulling in opposite directions and heading towards different goals. Furthermore, it would be very difficult to act together in a crisis. Again, your friends are not likely to be his friends, and that would further complicate matters. Children born and reared in a home where the parents are not of one mind, soon begin to take sides, and this might well bring you sorrow. Other things being equal you would be far happier with a husband of your own faith, or at least with one who raised no objection to you and your children going to church.

## CHAPTER 9

### LOOKING FORWARD TO MARRIAGE

#### EXPLORING YOUR LOVER'S PERSONALITY

**A**N engaged couple will add something to their knowledge of each other's character at almost every meeting. It is a great mistake for either lover to think that he or she, knows everything that is to be known about the other's disposition. This leads inevitably to surprises, and some of these may be startling. The early stages of love often resemble a game of hide and seek. Both lovers try to show off their best points and to conceal the rest. This is possible during courtship for, as a rule, few claims are made which have to stand the test of courage and sincerity. Discussing the



future, planning the home, telling each other one's dearest hopes, and finding out one's likes and dislikes; all these provide endless material for conversation and debate. The couple may feel there is no longer any necessity for those mental reserves which have hitherto put a barrier between them and all others, including their own families; that they can open their hearts to each other in a way they have never been able to do with any one else in the world. With some lovers of a romantic nature, there is a danger that the conversation will seldom get to a practical level. Subjects of the deepest importance will be merely touched upon, and as soon as a really urgent problem emerges they may unconsciously let it pass in the forgetfulness of another embrace. To such couples love may seem sufficient in itself to solve any future difficulty. But love and nothing else may soon mean nothing else. Then the shock of being brought back to earth will be severe, though possibly salutary.

### SHARING THE TROUBLES OF LIFE

Almost every lover has one particular illusion which is not easily dispelled. It persists often in married life, and may be the cause of unnecessary suffering. At the bottom it takes its rise from a kind of unrecognized cowardice. The man, especially if at all sensitive and protective, believes that he will forfeit some part of his sweetheart's regard if he tells her of his hardships and trials, and asks her to face these with him. He thinks that his duty is to protect her from every care, and he experiences a feeling of humiliation at the thought of making a true confession of any painful situation. So it comes about that he may try to conceal money and other troubles for as long as he can, and in consequence is liable to constant nerve strain and worry. In his pride and effort to conquer every difficulty, some form of concealment is common, both in courtship and marriage and "What will she think of me?" is too common a question. The fearful lover should know that a woman who truly loves (and who is worth loving) will rejoice to be made the confidante of his troubles, and will spring to his side to battle for her mate. Indeed, it is often just such a crisis as this that binds them closer than ever. In married life it is only the opportunity for combined endeavour which can prove the depth of a love that has never hitherto been fully tested. When, through no fault of his own, a lover who has got into difficulties goes to his sweetheart for help and consolation and is coldly received, he should take this as a clear warning that married life is likely to be a constant source of acute disappointment.

### WHY SEX SHOULD BE DISCUSSED

Sexual ignorance both in man and woman is probably the greatest of the ills that can wreck married happiness. If any two lovers are



to make a success of their marriage, it is absolutely necessary for the sex relationship between them to be a completely happy and satisfying one.

It is not many years since all reference to sex was taboo in polite society, but since medical and psychological research has proved conclusively that many maladies both physical and mental, have their origin in some defect of sexual functioning, no thinking man or woman should miss an opportunity of being as well informed as possible, for it is essential both for the health and well-being of any marriage.

Young women fortunate enough to receive sex instruction as children from enlightened parents, are able to face marriage without any of the qualms and reserves which afflict so many uninformed girls even today. Unfortunately, it is a fact that some women enter married life without any definite idea of their marital duties, and, as a consequence, are liable to emotional reactions which affect their health adversely, as well as that of their husbands. Love without courage is nothing more than an empty shell of what it ought to be—sentimentality, both weak and worthless. If the lovers start their sex life wrongly, then it is good-bye to peace of mind and content, because they find quicksands and pitfalls everywhere they turn.

### THE WISDOM OF PLAIN TALK

We admit at once that there are many important sexual problems which marriage alone can solve, but these should never debar an engaged couple from discussing many aspects of the subject quite frankly, and from exchanging ideas and finding out how far the opinion of one tallies with the other's. The man should take the lead in these intimate talks. It will seldom be necessary to approach the subject directly; numerous opportunities are sure to occur in the course of general conversation. This much at least should be discovered—whether both are in agreement about the wisdom of plain talk; if children are wanted; the right to limit the number of the family; freedom in marriage and married friendships; infidelity. Finding themselves of one mind on all these points is important and would be a cause for real satisfaction. But once it is known where each stands in regard to these vital problems, it would be well to drop all further discussion, unless some new factor crops up which immediately affects their welfare. No good purpose can be served by talking sex, unless there is a genuine quest for information. Lovers who have marriage to look forward to, will find themselves fully occupied in discussing the future with all the many problems in connection with housekeeping. When the absence of false shame and secret repressions have made it possible for an engaged couple to ask and answer intimate questions, they are then free to turn their attention to other things.

The first problem in married life centres on children.

There is no way of getting round the subject, or avoiding it. It is generally recognized that a woman's three great interests should be marriage, husband and children. For a number of reasons, children no longer assume the importance in some homes, that they had in former generations. For example, some engaged couples state quite frankly that they do not want children and regard them as encumbrances.

### CHILDREN OR NO CHILDREN ?

Briefly their arguments for "no family," are this : the woman fears either that pregnancy is a wearying time; that child-birth is painful and attended by risks, or that the care of children puts a strain upon the health, and curtails freedom in numerous directions. The man may think of the extra expense of keeping a child, and all the responsibility involved until it is old enough to support itself; of the danger of his wife losing her good looks and figure, and becoming less attractive, and of the excursions and pleasure-trips they would have to forgo for some long time.

Both parents too, may fear the thought of bringing a child into the unsettled state of the world today—with its uncertain future, and danger of war. It would be idle to exaggerate the extent of this feeling, but undoubtedly it exists, and to judge from the wireless discussions on the problem, it is quite widespread.

All these things may be true in a sense, although women's fears of child-birth are generally grossly exaggerated. Carefully compiled statistics show that ninety-five per cent of all births in this country are normal. This fact alone should go far to reassure and convince her that, with pre-natal care and skilful attention at the confinement, there is little to apprehend. Undoubtedly too, a big element of selfishness enters into the discussions of children or no children—into the calculations of what can and cannot be afforded—as to what pleasures and enjoyments would have to be given up here, and what discomfort added there.

In nearly every discussion of the problem, however, the young couple forget by far the most important point of all—in fact the very essence of the whole question.

### WOMAN'S NATURAL ROLE

To put it frankly a woman is designed by Nature to bear children. If against her own instincts she takes it upon herself to defy Nature's bidding, she is going to make her life less full and completely happy than it could and should be, and it is probable that she will feel that something is lacking all her days.

Some medical opinion holds that many of the ailments which afflict a number of childless women in middle age, would have been

avoided if they had borne children : they would have been healthier in mind and body.

Though it can be held that a woman is healthier if she fulfils her natural functions, in these days of medical science and sensible living that is not so much the consideration in this question as are the real desires of the two possible parents. If for economic reasons only they are determined not to have a child, then they should think again very carefully. They are depriving themselves of a link of married life which more than any other gives them unity and strength. But if their decision not to have children comes after deep, carefully weighed up discussion of their own inclinations, they are wise to abide by that decision.

It is as well to remember, however, that after some years of childless married life a woman may find that her husband alone is insufficient as her centre of interest. In such cases serious trouble lies ahead, for she begins to look about for other attractions. Fault-finding and nagging are typical symptoms of her behaviour and many unions may in such circumstances, break up entirely.

### TRAGEDY OF CHILDLESS MARRIAGES

In the great majority of these unfortunate marriages the birth of a desired and loved child would have been a godsend. The woman's whole attention would then have been focused upon the helpless infant, with her time fully occupied in supplying its needs; and in this she would have found satisfaction. Besides this, motherhood would have brought her natural pride and forged a very special link with her husband, with the assurance that she had fulfilled her mission in life. The childless married couples who are really happy and contented after many years—and many such exist—will be found almost without exception, to have turned a large part of their energies into social or public work of an engrossing nature. The measure of their unselfishness is usually the measure of their content. But the normal fiancée who for any reason is inclined to shrink from the idea of motherhood would do well to give these arguments the deepest consideration, before coming to any final decision.

Passion is a matter of surplus energy. This force may be used destructively, as well as constructively. It can be of great service when it is controlled and directed by an intelligent mind, and equally devastating when it is ruthlessly employed to further a selfish end. It is quite easy to be mistaken about the passionate possibilities of any man or woman. Often a noisy and demonstrative person is falsely accredited with possessing great virile power, whilst a quiet and retiring subject may give little indication of his hot and passionate nature. On the whole it is the restful type—or rather the more controlled—who possess the greater potentialities.

Who possesses the greater passion, man or woman? This question

has interested mankind from the earliest times. It is not easy to answer, for there are as many grades of passion as there are types of faces. There are men who give little evidence of any power to be deeply moved, just as there are magnetic women whose mere presence is sometimes sufficient to cause hosts of infatuated suitors to fall at their feet. Only one thing is certain—that man's passion is of a different nature from woman's. One cannot say it is deeper; it is not expressed in the same way, and it would be as well to realize that it is impossible to measure depths of passion in any individual until we have seen him confronted with someone who is capable of arousing all his emotions.

### PASSION AND LOVE

A man or woman can be unmoved by suitor after suitor, and seem to the casual observer quite cold and indifferent, and then show unbelievably depths of passion when at last someone capable of stirring them appears on the scene. There are countless instances where supposedly stable men and women have been swept off their feet by one great love.

It is most important therefore, that an engaged couple should know something of the *attitude* each adopts towards love. However much one thinks one knows before marriage of a partner's passionate nature, there is always the danger that disappointments and surprises may be in store. Unlike men, many women do not come into a full realization of their power of sexual response for some years after they are adults. It has been said that a youth grows into a man almost spontaneously, but a girl has to be kissed into a woman.

An intelligent fiancé should study the art of love, and never be so foolish as to believe that instinct in itself is a sufficient guide. No matter what difficulties and troubles may beset a married couple, if their sex life is harmonious in every way they will have a basis strong enough to overcome most obstacles. Therefore it is most important for an engaged couple to thrash out this question really thoroughly, and if they have any reason to suppose that they have been mistaken about the other's sex attitude or their desire and ability to respond in a normal way, it would be a hundred times better to part company, than to enter into a marriage foredoomed at the start to disappointment and failure.

### FAMILY LIMITATION

Only a few years ago it was impossible to talk about birth control at all freely; it was a forbidden subject, slightly disreputable, and any open mention of it was suppressed at once. Today all this has changed, the subject is discussed everywhere, but one relic still remains. Much of this discussion is ill-informed and may even be dangerous. It is essential that the problem of birth control should

ceive the consideration of every prospective husband and wife. Its importance has been recognized by many public bodies, and by individuals in responsible positions. There are strong advocates both for and against, but as with other problems of a personal nature, the final decision must be made by the individual. Sometimes there are urgent and valid reasons why a woman should not bear a child, and when indeed it would be almost a crime to do so. To counsel absolute continence in this case is easy, but to carry it into effect is often next to impossible. Here there can be no two opinions about the adoption of preventive measures, for it would be wrong to neglect the means which science has provided to meet such an emergency.

On the other hand, an old adage tells us that every good thing can be abused. When contraceptive devices are habitually employed only to secure an easier and more luxurious life for a healthy but childless woman designed by nature to be fruitful, then their use may well be deplored. As was explained before, it is doubtful if the wife will always retain her normal peace of mind and vigour, or the husband his full virility. It is, of course, a matter of individual conscience, and no one has the right to dictate to another. Under modern conditions and standards of living, the large, and often sickly families of former times, are no longer practicable or desired. Houses are small; women object to giving birth to a succession of children who cannot be adequately nursed or nourished. Birth control here too is useful, and may well be adopted.

### IS BIRTH CONTROL WISE ?

This is approaching the question simply from the point of view of family limitation. As such it is more germane to the problems of later married life and is dealt with more fully in the next section.

There is one aspect of the question, however, which is not often given the consideration it deserves. When there is no pressing reason why a young married couple should not have a child, deliberate prevention of conception can prove a very costly mistake. Young, passionate love should be essentially spontaneous. Anything which favours of deliberate interference can easily wreck the psychologically fine and sustained harmony which lovers should experience together. Birth control for the newly-married must always, even under the best of circumstances, be somewhat "cold-blooded" and mechanical. In some instances too, it can lead not only to exasperation and disappointment, but even to prejudice against the whole sexual act, or at least to indifference. Young husbands-to-be should always consider these arguments before taking the risk of severe disappointment, and future regret. For the average healthy married couple who are comfortably situated, a first child should be welcomed *at any time*, and nothing should be done to prevent pregnancy.



Lovers who have never known the "abandonment of love" in early married life have missed a vital experience, and one, which, however much desired, can never be recaptured in later life.

In any event, birth control in its relation to the problem of children or no children, is a vital subject on which all engaged couples must make up their minds before they marry.

### WHO IS TO RULE THE HOME ?

There is a story of a bridegroom, who, after declaiming to his bride : "And now we are one !" was taken aback to hear her retort: "Yes, dear, but *which* one?" In most lovers' discussions before marriage, there is a general tendency to avoid any mention of the role which each is to play in the home. At this time both are usually so ready to make concessions, and promise all sorts of impossible things, that it is often difficult to arrive at any definite decision. But it is well worth while to tackle this on a basis of stern reality, for as soon as the wedding and honeymoon are over, it comes up and often harshly. No one can fix a code which will suit everybody, but it is usual for the husband to assume responsibility for the main decisions, even when his wife has an equal share in framing them. His sphere will cover the purchase or lease of the house, the paying of rent, removals, repairs, renewals, giving notice to quit, buying and hiring furniture, alterations, insurance, school fees and the arrangement of holidays, while the wife will be answerable for the cooking, cleaning, mending and domestic arrangements in general.

On the other hand, some wives are excellent business women and some men are perfectly at home in the kitchen. This is all to the good, for each can help the other in time of need. The man who can cook a joint, wash-up, and feed the baby is a great asset in the home, but it would be a mistake for the wife to presume upon this—as many do—and expect her mate to turn domestic every time she wants to get out of some unpleasant duty. Although service may be given with apparent readiness, too many demands will make the man resentful and lead to quarrelling.

### WHY DOMINEERING IS FATAL

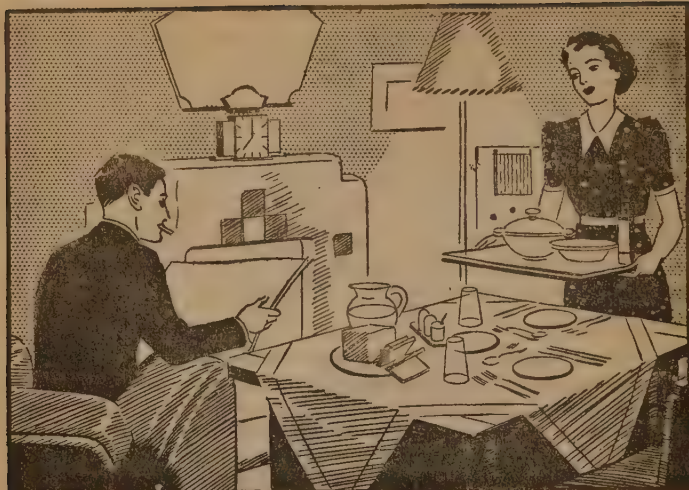
There are men and women who make the fatal mistake in early married life, of trying to domineer over the partner. "You don't love me if you won't do this," is the plea they voice every time any objection is raised. The man may try to get his way by bullying mildly, or by affecting to ignore the rights of his wife; the woman by being obstinate, petulant or tearful and by "feeling poorly" as a last resort. This is a repetition of the game they played as children, but the results now may well be serious. Most sensible wives will agree with the spouse whose definition of a perfect husband was "a man who makes me feel like a woman." The normal wife likes to

by her husband, to lean upon him for support—just as she did her father—when she knows his demands are just and unselfish. A considerate husband will respect his wife's wishes—as he did his mother's—when he sees they take his point of view into consideration. Engaged lovers, without drawing up any hard and fast plan of what 'I must do and you must not do,' should think over these points carefully and come to an understanding. After marriage each will have to make some concessions and re-shape their ideas a little here and there. Leaving things to right themselves is playing stupid, and may lead to such remarks as, "If I had only known," or "Who would have believed you could have done or said this, or that." In a well-ordered home there should be mutual consideration, with proper respect for the other's special duties, and no desire to infringe upon them.

### SHOULD WIVES GO TO WORK ?

Many marriages today are arranged on the basis that the wife will still continue in her job and put her earnings into the family budget. This is the problem which faces thousands of engaged girls : " Shall I keep working and make marriage possible, or shall I wait until my fiancé is earning enough to support us both ? " Before any definite answer can be given, each individual case must be closely examined. However, it may be helpful to point out some general considerations which may influence the decision one way or the other. The young bride who decides to remain on at work will be confronted by a double task—she must keep up the usual standard of office or shop efficiency, and run her own home at the same time. If she is healthy and strong, she may be able to undertake both duties, and all may go well for a time. The home will of necessity be small and easily run, and some meals will be taken in restaurants. Extra cash will enable man and wife to make many little excursions and holidays together. But even under the most fortunate circumstances there must be times when the strain will be great.

Not all women are domestic-minded; this fact must be recognized. To many of them an interest outside the home is a necessary stimulus for a rounded personality. They are happier in going to and fro between home and business, than they would be if they were tied down to one or the other. So far so good; but there are difficulties. A wife with outside work must avoid motherhood. The fear of becoming pregnant is now very real, and will be always present in her mind. This will affect her attitude to her husband in many ways of which she is not fully aware, but which he will not be slow to notice. In this case, if the partners escape frequent nervous irritation and occasional brain-storms they will be lucky. Again, if the husband is fond of his home, and his interests centre there, he may easily begin to be jealous of those things which tend to draw his



*To make marriage possible many young wives still continue to work. Under such circumstances they must plan as simple and as restful a domestic routine as they can. Otherwise the double task of running home and office will be too great a strain.*

wife away from the family circle. She may continue to give him every proof of affection, but that will not lessen his secret grouse that so many of her activities are directed, in a sense, away from him and his house. So long as the necessity for her to work continues, he can say nothing, but if his financial position should improve, it would provide an opportunity for squabbling. A very old English proverb about married life says : "Begin as you intend to go on." This is not always practicable, but when the girl must work after marriage, it is a good plan to propose a time limit for this outside work. An excellent solution is when the wife can undertake some interesting and profitable work at home, or has some part-time job which will not encroach too much upon her domestic duties. Other things being equal, it is better in many ways and far healthier for an engaged couple to marry, and work together for a time for the support of the home, than to remain in a state of unrest and dissatisfaction because there seems little prospect of marrying on the man's earnings.

### BREAKING OFF AN ENGAGEMENT

One of the most painful of life's problems arises when a fiancé has to decide whether to break the engagement or not. If it has been entered into sincerely and with good faith, and not in a frivolous spirit, it is a very serious decision to break it off. In the emotional joy of getting engaged he may well have stifled any incipient criticism and rushed into the engagement without considering the position soberly in all its aspects. Now, when time and increasing familiarity have disclosed grave defects in the partner's character, it is clear to the disillusioned lover there can be no peace of mind until the whole position has been thrashed out.

A young woman may have been infatuated with a man who knew how to flatter her and play on her weakest points. In a sentimental moment, she yielded to his request to be engaged. Now she discovers he has since had meetings with another girl, and is thoroughly untrustworthy in many ways. He confesses to this, begs forgiveness and entreats her not to send him away. Is he sincere? Does she still care for him enough? Will her love be sufficient to hold him?

### WHEN IT IS A CRIME TO MARRY

These problems can only be solved in one way. One partner has been severely injured and should take whatever action he or she thinks fit. But another type of problem is even more difficult. An engaged man (or conversely, a woman) has noticed that for some time he has not looked forward with any particular keenness to the hours spent with his fiancée. They do not quarrel; in fact, they agree upon most things. There is a desire to be sincere and understanding on both sides. But when he is with her he finds himself glancing at his watch. The girl, almost in tears, asks if he is bored;

he protests shamefacedly and kisses her again. But he feels no real response and is not stirred in the least. Everybody says it is a good match. The relatives on both sides are enthusiastic. He feels he *cannot* let her down; he must be honest and play the game. But in reality, it would be a sin for these two to marry. They would torture each other in their very attempt to be loving. And yet there are many of these "flat" marriages entered into every year, by young people who dread the publicity of breaking off the engagement. Any engagement which seems as unsatisfactory as this, should at all costs be broken. No false ideas of gentleman's behaviour should be allowed to stand in the way, for marriage is the greatest of human contracts, must stand a lifetime's test and may make or break both people's happiness. The disillusioned partner should have the courage to tell the truth and dare the result. From any viewpoint this can never be one-hundredth part as painful as the penalty of a lifetime of regret and discord.

### BREACH OF PROMISE SUITS AND GETTING REDRESS

The amount of unpleasant publicity involved in breach of promise suits is generally so great that it deters many a girl from trying to seek redress, even in cases where she has suffered considerable loss from the broken engagement. The average jilted fiancée is only too likely to keep her disappointment to herself, and nurse her sorrows privately. Sometimes, too, when the first grief and disappointment have passed, she sees good reason to be thankful for having escaped a marriage which could have brought her nothing but sorrow and disillusion. If she is young, she generally hopes to find another lover, and her past experience may well stand her in good stead in helping her to judge character and pretensions more clearly. The saddest cases are those where a girl has perhaps been preparing for her marriage for some years, and may even have resigned a good position and spent a great deal of money on purchases for the house. At this stage desertion means that not only is she financially a loser, but much valuable time has been wasted, and her chances of securing a husband thereby considerably lessened. Under these circumstances her relations may press her to sue for damages. If she has been very much in love she may be reluctant to do this, but all the world knows that a love spurned can easily turn to dislike and even hate, and revenge in some form may appear sweet. A man may be sued for breach of promise when he breaks his contract by marrying another woman, or fails to marry his fiancée within some agreed time.

Sometimes a girl is puzzled to know if she has any claim upon a defaulting lover with whom she has kept company for some long time. He may have promised to marry her but never given her a ring, or made any statement in writing which could be produced as evidence.



of his intention. In the eyes of the law such a man is regarded as legally engaged, if it has been understood between the two and their friends that the marriage would take place. To employ a legal phrase, "The intent is held to be proved by the conduct of the parties." A minor—a man under twenty-one—cannot be held responsible in a court of law for any promise to marry he may have made. A very difficult and problematical position arises when a girl practises some form of deception in order to secure her man and make him promise to marry her. It is the man's business, of course, to use his wits to counter any trick of this sort, but there are cases when he could not be aware of the method by which he was enticed. There are women without resources, who give promises of financial aid; widows who declare themselves spinsters; middle-aged tricksters who pretend to be ten to fifteen years younger; chronic sufferers from some hidden complaint, who declare themselves physically fit; even criminals with records of sentences served. Whenever there has been fraudulent representation, or wilful concealment of some former situation of life, no action for breach of promise would be upheld.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### SHOULD BUSINESS COME BEFORE LOVE ?

*I have been engaged for four years to one of the straightest boys I have ever known. We are to be married in a few months' time, but lately I have wondered whether we shall be happy in our wedded life. My boy is very ambitious and his thoughts seem to be centred on his work. He stays late at the shop, and when I have remonstrated with him that in doing this, he neglects me, he says that work is more important at the moment, and he is leaving all the wedding arrangements to me, saying that anything I decide is all right with him. I am afraid his work will always come first, yet I love him very much. What do you think about this position of affairs?*

You are fortunate in having a mate who appreciates hard work, and is determined to get on. This seems to promise that he will be able to support you and any children you may have, in comfort. In leaving all the wedding arrangements to you he shows his complete confidence in your ability to manage. Again, honesty of character is an asset you may well be proud of, for this may well spare you much jealousy and suspicion. Unfortunately for all his good points, you may find your fiancé insufferable in marriage. Romance and continuous hard work are rather an unusual combination, and he has evidently decided to concentrate on business to the exclusion of all other interests. Love to him, it would seem, is "a thing apart."

If your emotional demands are great, you seem destined to be disappointed. A man who puts business before love on this great occasion—and is not afraid to say so—is hardly likely to give you a great deal of consideration later on. But your statement “I love him very much,” seems to point to a number of factors which are undisclosed in your letter.

If these outweigh any fears you entertain, you may in course of time, by the exercise of your womanly tact, win him over to your point of view, and away from a soulless business routine which threatens to mar your chances of happiness.

### MY FIANCÉ DECEIVED ME—WHAT SHOULD I DO ?

*I have had a great shock. I was to be married next month to a man I loved dearly. He is forty-seven and I am only twenty-two. Although he was never very communicative I always understood him to be a bachelor. Yesterday, imagine my surprise, when in a very agitated state of mind, he confessed to me that his wife had died only three years before, and he had five children living with a sister in the country, their ages ranging from my own time to a boy of seven. He begged me not to break off our match, saying that he had said nothing because of his fear of losing me. I still love him, but I must say my faith in him has received a severe blow. What do you advise me to do?*

You ought to be the best judge of your fiancé's love for you, and the final decision as to whether you marry him or not must rest with you. However, it cannot be denied that silence in this case was deceitful and dishonest. He had no business to propose to you without disclosing his family circumstances, and your consent was obtained under false pretensions. Having thus shown evidence of a grave defect of character, it is for you to verify all his subsequent statements if you intend to go on with the match. You should insist upon seeing his children, and upon his answering any question you may want to put to him about his previous life or affairs. Should you find his children or relatives antagonistic to your marriage for any reason, you must have a clear understanding that they are not to share your home. In any case, you should arrange to have your husband to yourself for a definite period at the beginning of your wedded life whenever it is possible.

When a young woman marries a middle-aged man with a family, she takes certain risks which can pave the way to early disagreement and disputes all round, not the least painful of which centre on the relations between stepmother and children.

You are strongly advised to reconsider your position from more than one point of view, and to weigh things very carefully in your mind before giving your final answer. It is better to be cautious now than run the risk of lifelong unhappiness.

**MUST A WIFE HAVE A MONEY SENSE ?**

*My fiancée and I have been discussing the financial side of marriage. Although she is an intelligent girl she does not strike me as possessing very business-like qualities. She often rounds off a discussion with "Oh, I daresay that will be all right," or "We can leave that to work itself out, can't we?" or some such hazy remark. I have tried to point out how necessary it is to fix up in advance just how much we can afford for this or for that, but as she has always lived at home with her parents she does not seem to grasp details very quickly. Is not a money sense indispensable to a good housewife?*

Yes, without a doubt. Girls who have had no experience of office book-keeping or housekeeping, and have never been responsible for handling household accounts, are apt to undervalue the necessity for recording purchases made and cash paid out. Going to father or mother for money seems quite natural to them, and they are apt to imagine that all their transactions with shopkeepers will be equally automatic, or that after marriage they can fall back upon the husband to put any mistake right. You cannot begin to teach your fiancée business methods too early. A clever wife will make a poor man's income go sometimes almost twice as far as a partner who has no idea of buying in the best market, and checking her purchases regularly.

One prospective husband, who was faced with the same problem as yourself, used to shop with his future bride. They would go to various stores, compare prices, and see how much they could buy with a certain prearranged sum. Later, by way of a change, each would shop separately, and spending equal money try to secure the greater bargains. What was a tedious task to the fiancée to begin with, finished by developing into an interesting game. At the risk of appearing lacking in sentiment you must get your fiancée to tackle this question seriously. Love and money muddles do not mix, and the first is unfortunately apt to become swallowed altogether.

**SHOULD I MARRY A MAN WHEN I HATE HIS FAMILY ?**

*I love the man I am to marry, passionately, and I know his feelings for me are the same. The prospects of happiness for us both are really marvellous, I think; but there is a snag . . . I detest his family. Mother, father, sisters and brothers all seem to regard me as an interloper, and are definitely rude to me whenever the occasion offers. Am I running my head into a noose by considering marriage in these circumstances?*

Yes ! unless you take certain definite steps. Have you, by chance, done anything to antagonize the whole of your fiancé's family? It is somewhat exceptional for an entire household to make a stand

## OUGHT I TO MARRY MY FIANCÉE WHEN I FIND I LOVE ANOTHER GIRL ?

*Some years ago I was in love with a girl much younger than myself—she was twenty-one and I was nearly thirty. She, however, obviously did not care for me and told me so quite frankly. Some time afterwards I became engaged to a girl just a year or two my junior. I am due to marry her shortly. Now the first girl has crossed my path again, and tells me that she wants me more than anyone in the world. And I realize that I could never be happy with the girl to whom I am engaged. I am utterly miserable, and do not know what to do. Please help me with your advice.*

This is an extremely difficult position, and one that needs much careful thought on your part. In the first place you should find out what has caused your earlier love to make such a complete swing round in her attitude to you. There are some girls who cannot accept a man's love when it is free, but just as soon as another woman enters his life they realize they do not want to lose him, and make every effort to recover lost ground. The question may then be asked, is this a genuine love, or does it arise from jealousy, and the desire to prevent another from taking the spoil? When a woman has said "No" frankly to a man's offer—supposing it is not premature—and her refusal appears to be genuine, a change of mind on her part should be considered very carefully. Personal reasons may prompt her to accept the old suitor because something has gone wrong with another love affair, or, to take a more generous view, she may really see some attraction in him now which previously she had missed.

If the physical attractions of your old love have an overwhelming influence upon you, you should make sure there are other sound qualities which would warrant taking such a grave step as breaking off your present engagement. Having carefully considered everything, if you decide you cannot marry your fiancée, you should tell her what is in your mind, hiding nothing. Your decision will undoubtedly be a severe shock to her, but she will hardly wish to hold you against your will. The only thing remaining for you to do, is to make all amends possible for this breach, even if it entails considerable financial sacrifice and the postponement for some time of any future marriage.

## SHOULD A FIANCÉ CORRESPOND WITH AN OLD LOVE ?

*Three months before the date fixed for our marriage, I am beginning to grow suspicious of my fiancé's good faith. Before I met him he had the reputation of being a "sport," and I know he has had more than one serious flirtation. Between the pages of a book he lent me recently, I found a letter from one of his old "flames"*

*couched in—well, anything but cold terms. When I showed it to him he laughed and said he could not stop the girls from writing. I told him his duty was to inform them he was about to be married and desired no further correspondence. He declined to do this, and could not understand my vexation. I should be glad to know if you think my request was a reasonable one?*

You were well within your rights in asking him to make a special point of telling his friend of his coming marriage. But no man likes to be given instructions as to whom he must, and must not write, and from whom he may or may not receive letters. In marriage one undertakes certain definite responsibilities, but does not agree to have freedom of action challenged, unless it can be proved that such action is prejudicial to the best interests of the marriage. Your fiancé does not seem to take his former lady friend's remarks in a serious vein, or trouble to destroy or conceal her letters. Perhaps the idea that you might be really jealous has not occurred to him, nor is it a good thing to enter on marriage already jealous. The chances are that when his intended marriage is known, his correspondents' letters will either cease altogether or else change in character.

Your best course is to tell your future husband your point of view, and ask him to stop any letters from women, in so far as he is able, which he would not like you to read. If he comes to see that continued suspicion on your part would certainly spoil all chances of complete happiness in marriage, he will doubtless agree to meet with your wishes.

### SHOULD A MOTHER-IN-LAW SHARE A BRIDE'S HOME ?

*Everything seemed to be progressing very well in our arrangement to be married before my fiancé suddenly sprang on me: "Of course you know mother is counting upon living with us?" I was so taken aback at the time I could only say tamely, "Is that so?" My future husband seemed disappointed that I did not put more spirit into my comment, but since having time to think things over, I have decided that a second woman in the house would imperil our happiness. My fiancé's mother is not what you would call a difficult person, but she has a quiet but determined way of getting what she wants. It has been pointed out to me that she would help with the domestic work and lighten my duties, but I would rather work harder and be on my own. Do you think my attitude unreasonable?*

You have a perfect right to protest against your husband's mother sharing your home, if there is any possible way of providing for her elsewhere. It was certainly unfair for this demand to be made upon you, after all preparations for your marriage had been fixed up.



It is undeniable that there are cases where mother-in-law and daughter-in-law manage to live together on friendly and even affectionate terms, but in the ordinary way this is far too great a test to impose upon any bride. You will naturally want to assert your full claim upon your husband's affections and care, and are looking forward to the hours you will be able to spend in each other's company. But in a small house your privacy cannot help being intruded upon by a third person, and this can spoil any chance of intimate talk together. Again, an older and more experienced woman will want to take the lead, or to advise about the household details. Such remarks as : "John likes his meat done in this way," or "I am sure my John will never eat that," can be intensely exasperating, even if said without meaning to hurt. But the greatest trial may well be when in the case of a difference of opinion the mother turns to her son for support. Your husband would then be placed in a most embarrassing position, for to be loyal to one, he must show seeming disloyalty to the other.

Beginning married life is a new adventure for the man as well as for the woman. There are snags and pitfalls, as well as ecstasy and a manner of joys. Your husband will need all his intelligence and tact in order to meet every situation successfully, and this applies with special force to the first year or so. If he were torn between his duty to you and his mother it would be good-bye to the happiness of all three. Your best plan is to tell your fiancé of your fears and plan some arrangement with him which would leave you the undisputed mistress of your own home.

### SHOULD A MEDICAL EXAMINATION PRECEDE MARRIAGE ?

*I am to be married within the next three months. My fiancée and myself are broadminded and desirous of doing all we can to ensure the success of our wedded life. Although neither of us is anxious to enforce the point, we have agreed it would be very satisfactory to know that we were both free from any taint of disease, and could become the parents of healthy children. I have mentioned our intention to my own people, but they are not particularly sympathetic, whilst my fiancée's parents are definitely against her taking such a step, and indeed even suggested it is immodest. Will you please tell us your views?*

In submitting yourself to a physical examination before you get married, you are setting an excellent example to every couple about to enter matrimony. Young people with fine, healthy bodies should rejoice in them, and be glad to have the fact corroborated by a competent medical practitioner. With the spread of the teaching of modern eugenics it can be only a question of time before either voluntary or compulsory examinations are undergone as a matter of course. The prospective bride could consult a lady doctor without

any hurt to her finer feelings. It may happen in some cases that skilled medical advice can be of very great benefit. When doubts or fears of any sort exist, it should be resorted to at once and without hesitation.

It is not suggested here that physical fitness alone will ensure a happy marriage. Perhaps, in some future era, trained psychologists will also be asked to determine the partner's suitability from the emotional standpoint. In a really successful alliance, both physical and emotional elements will be well balanced. But both husband and wife have the right to know that their partner enters marriage with a physique strong enough to give promise of freedom from those crippling ills which can take away so many of the joys of matrimony.

## SECTION IV

# MARRIED LIFE AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

## CHAPTER 10.—SETTLING DOWN

### GOING ON A HONEYMOON

**J**UST think. We're going to Paris for five days. Isn't it wonderful!" This honeymoon trip, long looked forward to and saved for, gives the prospective bride a thrill when she tells her envious friends the great news. The bridegroom is happy that a long-cherished dream is about to be realized. . . . To go on the Continent for the first time, and with his wife. . . .

The wedding feast has to be hurried to enable them to catch the local train to London. In the packed boat-train they sit cramped and a little embarrassed by the meaningful smiles and glances of their fellow-passengers, who are not slow to note the confetti sprinkled on their clothes and luggage. Sybil's head is throbbing by the time they board the Channel boat, and Jack wonders if the reports of a rough crossing are true. Soon he is doing his best to cheer a very crumpled little bride, and is feeling far from well himself. Another three hours in a suffocating carriage, and then the bustle of the arrival. The guide rushes them to a cheap hotel in a back street, and from their ill-lighted room they survey acres of roof and chimney stacks. Jack thinks he ought to make some comment, but a look at Sybil's tired and travel-stained face cuts him short. Sybil doesn't want supper, but only to be quiet and collect herself. Until the early morning, noisy footsteps pass to and fro in the corridor, and loud voices disturb them from the next room for most of the night. Three days of charabanc drives, noisy crowds and strange food, and then an equally fatiguing journey home again. "I suppose it was all

marvellous," comments one of Sybil's friends, but the highly-strung young bride feels that it was all rather a nightmare: she would never say so. Not for all the money in the world would she say anything to let Jack down.

It is a great mistake for honeymooners with limited time and money to plan a holiday of this sort. The object of a honeymoon is to spend as much time with each other in as pleasant surroundings as possible, and here this is frustrated at the very start by the constant racket and strain of coping with unusual conditions. The man may find it stimulating in some ways, but for a young bride who has never travelled far from home it can easily become both nerve-racking and wearying.

The ideal short honeymoon, as we have said, should be spent in bright, cheerful and easily-reached surroundings, with the assurance of restful conditions in the house and plenty of outdoor amusement if they are needed. Offers of hospitality from relatives or friends should never be accepted if there seems any chance of one's privacy being interrupted. Honeymooners will have little time or inclination for anyone but themselves. The husband should always remember that his bride will not get the most out of a honeymoon if she is tired or apprehensive in any way. She needs time to adapt herself to the new conditions. A good start is of the utmost importance and can have wide-reaching effects, and a little thought spent now on securing the happiest kind of honeymoon, with pleasant memories lingering after, is very well worth while and will be repaid a hundredfold in later life.

### THE REAL MEANING OF MARRIAGE

Throughout their engagement, a couple will always have almost as much to say about each other to their friends and relatives, as to discuss between themselves. A future husband will never miss a chance of talking about his girl's good qualities, and his fiancée is for ever chatting to her friends, maybe telling them of her hopes and fears, showing them her trousseau, and, if she is at all popular, revelling in a whirlwind of compliments and congratulations. During their courtship, they are in the centre of the stage and receive nothing but support and good wishes. As soon, however, as they are married the situation suddenly changes. They are responsible now solely to each other, and can no longer run to their friends in the same way with all their gossip.

There will be new and unaccustomed reserves, and matters and problems which concern them alone. Perhaps, it has never occurred to the young husband that he is no longer at liberty to make what use he likes of his time. The old free and easy days are over, and he must account for his hours to his wife, who, though she does not want to pry, will always like to know where he has been, and why. This

aking on the responsibility for another, and giving up many old pleasures and recreations, is an aspect of married life which is realized by far too few. A wise wife will allow her man a reasonable amount of freedom, but many young wives begin to assert their claims on their husband's time almost from the wedding-day. Marriage, too, will force the couple to be more exact and truthful than ever. During their engagement, they may well have spoken often of the things they liked to do, and said but little of their individual dislikes and hatreds. But the intimacy of married life will prevent these from being hidden for long, for in a moment of tension, or of exasperation, some confession may be made which can surprise or hurt. There is no use now running off to mother or to a bosom friend for consolation. Any difficulties must be confined to the two of them, and they alone can find the solution. Taking troubles to outsiders is one of the shortest cuts to unhappiness and family quarrels.

### WHAT EVERY YOUNG HUSBAND SHOULD KNOW

It is of the utmost importance that a young husband should have some knowledge of the attitude of his bride to the love relationship. No lover can make a graver mistake than to believe that, because his desires are impetuous and will brook no denial, his wife must necessarily feel the same. However much they may have discussed this subject before marriage, neither can be sure that their anticipations will come up to expectation. It has been stated that not one first sexual experience in fifty is completely satisfactory. Remembering this fact will lessen the chance of disappointment and discouragement. Women vary enormously in their response, and much as a young husband may believe he understands his wife's temperament, he should be warned against hasty judgment and any attempt at fault-finding or condemnation. Patience and gentle consideration should be his watchwords, and the more he displays these qualities the more likely is he to win the esteem and gratitude of his bride. Many marriages have been failures only because indifference and roughness have so prejudiced a sensitive bride, that all subsequent sexual relations have become painful and distasteful.

With a woman, the sex feelings are more diffused, and not nearly so easily concentrated in the early days of marriage. An element of fear may also act as a brake upon display of the emotions. It is the young husband's task to remove these doubts and to win his wife over to a happy confidence. This may be an affair of weeks, possibly of months, and can be a severe strain upon the patience and goodwill of an ardent lover. But it is tremendously worth while. For many generations women have suffered from false teachings and many kinds of repressions about sex life, and although the modern girl may seem to be free to a large extent from these, deep in her consciousness there may still remain traces of prudery and superstition.

The bridegroom should prove his skill by gradually removing these qualms; for as long as they persist no full response to his advances will be possible. On the other hand, any bride who really wants to hold her husband and share his ecstasy, should learn to free herself from any sense of shame, wrong-doing, or fear of hurt. By studying his young wife carefully, the husband should come to know when his embraces will be welcomed and when it would be better to restrain his desires. There could be no greater folly than forcing his attentions at a time when they are likely to arouse resentment and dislike. Indeed, it is probably best that no attempt at consummation should be made until all these fears are removed, and the preliminary love-making has shown clearly that the wife desires it.

Strange as it may seem, there are cases of young women who enter marriage with the haziest ideas of what is involved. Where there has been no enlightenment in the teens, and the courtship has been marked by a reluctance or refusal to discuss sex, it is certain that there will still be a big batch of problems to be decided. A young husband may find his bride distressed at the idea of any approach to intimate relationship. Although in course of time she may yield to her mate's entreaties it may be in a spirit of sacrifice, and if he is at all sensitive he may be left with the feeling that he has violated her. In this case marriage can bring with it nothing but growing misery and regret. To show to what extent sexual ignorance is widespread, the British Social Hygiene Council investigated four hundred and seventy-two matrimonial cases which came before one police court alone, and out of this number considerably more than half these disharmonies were directly due to want of sexual knowledge. Adequate instruction here would probably have saved the situation.

### ADJUSTMENT REQUIRES TIME AND PATIENCE

There are young wives who are not able to participate fully in the married relationship until after the birth of a child, whilst others find the range of their emotions widening with the passage of time, and a gradual growth of confidence in the love and forbearance of their husband. There are others who feel an aversion to physical love except at rare intervals, and still more who are so afraid of becoming pregnant that it spoils any pleasure they may have felt in intercourse. A certain number of young brides suffer from some slight disability of the procreative organs which, while not serious in itself, is sufficient to prevent adequate functioning. In this case the husband should try to persuade his wife to consult a competent surgeon at once who, with a minimum of discomfort and pain, can usually put matters right. Sometimes through prudery this condition is allowed to continue for years, leaving a train of increasing disappointment and despair behind it. It is a serious problem when a newly-married



ple seem to be getting very little satisfaction out of their wedded life, and begin to accuse each other of shortcomings, for a growing sense of frustration may easily make them nervous and irritable, and they may even be approaching the point when their marriage seems likely to break up. Sometimes a far-seeing friend guesses that some trouble is on hand, for sexual discord shows itself often in obvious ways. In this case a confidential and sympathetic talk with the husband, may lead to his consulting a medical man who is also a psychologist, and able to give invaluable advice.

Once again it must be emphasized that it is nearly always the mental attitude to sex that is at the root of such difficulty. No matter how competent a wife or husband may be from a physical point of view, if they carry a load of superstition or prejudice, it will be impossible for them to adopt a sane and rational outlook, and this alone will enable them to tackle and overcome their difficulties.

### EDUCATING THE EMOTIONS

The young husband who believes that things will never change, may have some agreeable surprises in store. Underneath the cold surface of a seemingly indifferent wife, there may be a sea of emotion which only awaits liberation. Reading informative books together; visiting inspiring plays, pictures and films; travelling when possible, and widening their general interests, may gradually begin to work upon the imagination so that, in course of time, a completely satisfying response may follow. The husband's emotional education will be progressing at the same time, so that he will know when to give his wife a lead and when to discipline his own desire. It is no easy task, but every successful married man has learned it, and found its continued study well worth while. It is no exaggeration to say that in some cases perfect sexual adjustment may take a matter of years, and that for some couples there are as many problems to tackle as any book of mathematics ever contained. Just as an impetuous and wilful husband can spoil the chance of making his marriage a success, so can a persevering and understanding man remove the inhibitions of a timid, hesitant wife, and turn an unhappy marriage into a success.

### COLD WIVES AND INDIFFERENT HUSBANDS

Husbands with a sense of honour and discretion, seldom discuss the intimate side of their lives outside the home, but some do so and it is usually to complain of the coldness or indifference of their wives. Innumerable questions about this condition reach the editors of all popular journals. Medical men who specialize in sex-psychology, and who have access to information otherwise difficult to procure confirm this, quoting statistics to prove their case. One consultant, who has investigated thousands of discordant matches,

gave it as his considered opinion that out of one hundred marriages, twenty women were completely cold; twenty-five were indifferent and possessed little power of sexual response; thirty were not averse to intercourse at times, but never showed any particular enthusiasm; fifteen were warm, and only ten could be termed really passionate. In other words, every other woman was incapable of meeting the needs of a husband who looked for a full marital response. These figures have often been challenged, but undoubtedly a considerable number of women take little interest in the love relationship.

### POSSIBLE CAUSES OF FRIGIDITY

Husbands who have been intrigued, while they were courting, by their wife's stateliness and dislike for the "crude side of life," often find that this distaste extends into married life. This type of disappointment is extremely common. To get at the root of the problem the woman's life history must be studied. In many cases it will be found that her upbringing was narrow and faulty. Perhaps parents and teachers have exercised a pernicious influence over her, by suggesting that all sex was painful and degrading, and when such ideas have been imbibed at an early age, they are not easily dislodged. A first experience with a clumsy and tactless partner may have helped to confirm this impression, and to create a profound dislike for all future intimacy. On the other hand the reproductive organs may have been undeveloped, and so are incapable of performing their functions adequately. Another reason put forward, is that some women imagine they are submitting to masculine demands when they give themselves to their husbands—the last thing in the world they want to do. More or less consciously a wife of this type, by remaining frigid, tries to prove her superiority by disappointing her husband.

### NEED FOR CONSIDERATION

Whatever the cause, the problem remains acute until a partial cure or a compromise is arrived at. Probably, in most cases, the fundamental reason is that they are wrongly mated, and that with another husband she would be more responsive. It happens sometimes that widows who have been frigid with their first husbands, find complete satisfaction in a second marriage. The husband, however, cannot always be exonerated from blame. If he has little idea of sex technique, or thinks that by simply following his own ill-controlled instincts, and insisting upon his "rights" at all times, all will be well, he may seal his fate for ever, so far as any *real* consummation is concerned. Only by observing a scrupulousness in every detail, by a quick awareness of the partner's likes and dislikes, and, above all, by the wish to give as well as to receive, can a real response be awakened, and this alone can make married life worthy of that name.

Most fiancés believe they know their future wives' characters from A to Z by the time the wedding-day arrives. They may have spent countless hours together discussing almost every topic under the sun, and if they have had differences of opinion, each has been only too ready to make allowances and stop any chance of a dispute. Probably the girl has shown a willingness to defer to her lover's views, or has discreetly held her tongue. The husband-to-be sees a peaceful time ahead, when his word will be law in the house, and he will need only to try to get his way in most things.

It is often a severe shock to him to find that the one-time demure maiden has really a strong will of her own, and soon after the wedding ceremony is beginning to state quite plainly what she wants, and does not want. The young husband has never dreamed of her in this light. Astonished, he asks himself how this side of her character had remained hidden from him. That strange glint in her eyes, and the way she compresses her lips when she states her side of a question, make him almost believe he is talking to a stranger instead of the wife he thought he knew so well.

### NEED FOR REALISM IN MARRIAGE

Possibly up to the time of marriage he may have been so absorbed with romance, that he had never thought of his wife in the kitchen, and doing practical things about the house. Washing up dirty plates, and remonstrating with tradesmen when they have supplied inferior goods, demands a matter-of-fact attitude, and the average young wife will not hesitate at times to show this side of her character to her husband. If he is a sensitive type he may shrink and be even a trifle scared. In any case, he will be wise to stifle any hasty response, for this might easily start a domestic scene—probably the forerunner of many others.

A husband confronted by this unexpected problem, should always remember that a man can afford the luxury of being sentimental about many things in life which demand the utmost realism from a woman. During the dreamy days of courtship his partner may have been willing for him to do most of the thinking, but now that she is part and parcel of his household she is fully determined to assert her right to a say in the management. It may take a lot of hard thinking for the newly-married man to appreciate this. But every day will show the wisdom of combining forces, and the folly of standing out for one-sided privileges, for this will only be a cause of constant trouble and bartering.

Another problem which may easily trouble a newly-married husband, are the occasional moods which come over his wife. At breakfast she may be all smiles and full of chatter, but before tea-time she seems tired and depressed, and answers his anxious inquiries with a few sharp words. On these occasions a wise husband will

guard his tongue, refrain from criticism, and wait for the clouds to lift. An unwise word or complaint might easily bring about a quarrel, and would only make the situation more difficult. More especially round about the time of the woman's monthly periods is she liable to be contrary, capricious and even hostile. But, again, a few hours after a display of tantrums she will be showing the greatest tenderness and solicitude. This inconsistency puzzles most husbands, and leaves them guessing as to what they may expect next. Here, a husband should always remember that his mind and that of his wife often work on very different lines, and that the anger of a woman but rarely resembles a man's. As a rule it is short-lived like a spring thunderstorm. Above all, he must be careful not to let his wife's display of ill-temper rouse any reaction on his part.

### WHAT IS A NORMAL LOVE RELATIONSHIP ?

Many women get considerable excitement and even a kind of pleasure out of quarrelling. They feel lighter and happier after having let themselves go. This may strike a man as distinctly childish, but he has to remember that women are more easily moved to demonstration, and that, as a rule, their feelings are more on the surface. A young husband should never allow himself to be too greatly impressed by his wife's changeful moods. In his anxiety to pacify or to improve things he may easily spoil his own chances of happiness. By keeping calm and considerate, and so giving a proof of his manhood, he will win his wife's respect, even if she makes no open acknowledgment of this. When he realizes that a woman can often get considerable excitement out of trivial worries and joys, that would not stir him in the least, he will begin to understand the wisdom of "looking on and saying nowt." The golden rule is not to take these moods too seriously.

Many husbands and wives often wonder if their intimate love relationship is as satisfactory as other couples'—if their marriage is in any way ideal, or whether others really get more enjoyment from it. The whole question of sex and its manifestations is so wrapped in mystery that it is very difficult for ordinary people to get accurate information about it. Even specialists sometimes disagree, for the deepest study may not be able to remove some innate prejudice. In some books, for example, warnings are given that too frequent intercourse is harmful to both husband and wife, while other guides stress the discomforts which may arise from undue restriction and repression. The couple who want to make sure of retaining both health and happiness, are almost certain to ask what is normal and right. No one can lay down fixed rules which will apply to all husbands and wives indiscriminately. If a hundred young married couples could be brought to confess the details of their intimate love life, it would be found there were many whom intercourse



seemed to strengthen and benefit in every way, even when entered into almost every day, and others who felt debilitated and depressed by the relationship when experienced at so long intervals as a month or more. A small, ill-sexed, or ill-matched minority, after vain attempts to gain any sort of satisfaction, practically renounce this side of married life. There is, however, one law which holds good generally. If intercourse at any time is followed by a lasting depression and a sense of debility, it is evident that sexual intercourse is in need of regulation. When the relationship is right these symptoms will not appear, for the mutual stimulation should be such that both the partners are satisfied. It would be folly to suppose that husbands and wives are equally ardent on all occasions. There are times and seasons when the woman is attracted, or indifferent, or even repelled. Here a young husband must take care to avoid any act which would lead to a habit of unhappy response being set up. In all cases, the relationship is a matter for individual adjustment and demands more common sense than detailed technical knowledge.

The love partnership should never be allowed to deteriorate till it becomes commonplace and ordinary. As soon as it ceases to be a spontaneous joy for any couple it would be well to make intercourse a rarer occurrence. Only when it is really desired by both husband and wife can it bring any benefit to mind and body. So many urgent problems of married life centre around this all-important function, that unless a solution is found which will meet the requirements of both husband and wife, disagreement may spread quickly to other sides of their domestic life. Instinct certainly is not an all-sufficient guide, and should always be subjected to careful discipline. This may seem irksome at first, but from every viewpoint it will be well worth while in the end.

### STRENGTH OF HOME TIES

Many young husbands sometimes find themselves asking if the girl they married really belongs to them, as much as they once thought. It may be some such remark as : " I don't think father would approve of this," or " I think I had better consult mother first," which seems to place their husband in the background and make him a figure of secondary importance. This feeling did not arise during courtship, for it was to her parents the girl was still looking for guidance, and not to her future husband. But once the breakaway from the old home has been made, it is not unusual for her thoughts to wander back, and for many of her actions to be determined by her parents' outlook. This is a common state of affairs. Probably, one woman in three still clings to her father or mother with a child's devotion, and tries on many occasions to bring her husband round to her family's point of view.

Nothing can exasperate a young husband more than to be told



constantly, "Dear father was always *so* dependable," or "*Of course* we've got to consider mother's wishes." A father-in-law has two advantages over a husband. He has possessed the affection of his daughter since she was a child—the husband is at best the second lover. Again, the older man has had more experience of life and can handle some matters with greater wisdom. If the father has been a man of the strong, domineering type—the sort usually most loved and revered—the young wife may expect to find this quality in her husband. Any show of weakness on his part will inevitably invite an uncomplimentary comparison. If the wife fails to make a more or less complete change-over of her affections to her husband, serious difficulties are bound to arise.

The worst of it is that the woman seldom realizes where the trouble lies, and resents with all her force any attempt on the part of her husband to win her away from this childish dependence. More than one husband, in a fit of desperation, has made a final effort to be the only man in her life, by removing his home to a far spot where communication with his wife's family would be less easy.

In severe cases, the wife is often cold to her husband, and may come to dislike the sex relationship. She feels there is something guilty about it and unclean. It is an extremely difficult problem, and is bound to try the husband's endurance severely. In trying to cure her, he should use all his skill and craft to bring about a second weaning, and not fail to point out to his wife that she cannot serve two masters without sooner or later inviting disaster.

### WHY SOME WIVES ARE UNHAPPY

Just as a young wife may want to refer everything of importance to her parents' judgment, so a young husband may be unable to cast off the spell of his mother's influence. His wife may think that in marrying him she will find a protector, counsellor and safe refuge, but gradually she discovers that her mate is still a child at heart, and looks to her for mothering and assurance. Their married home is not so much a castle as a place to which he can run from the demands of the outside world, to be consoled and petted. If his wife will listen to his complaints, and pamper him as mother used to do, all may be well for a time; but if she should resent this attitude there will be constant whining and reproaches. There are some women who ask for nothing better than for a husband to eat from their hands, and be subject to their will in every way; but a greater number have a secret scorn of a partner who requires constant propping and support. In such cases the birth of a child may save the situation, for then the young mother's interest will be centred exclusively upon her baby, and her husband tolerated as a wage-earner and little more. Husbands of this unhappy type seldom possess much sexual virility. Many of them are more or less impotent. They have little initiative,

and their biggest bursts of effort are shown in displays of tantrums and sulks when their moods are opposed. With the passage of years many of this dependent type tend to become neurotic, and may make much trouble in the home. Occasionally matters are helped by the wife leaving him for a time to his own resources; but some wives in this situation are subjected to very great temptation, particularly, they happen to fall in love with anyone else. They feel they have been cheated out of life, and have the right to experience at least a part of the romance which has been withheld from them.

### THE FIRST QUARREL

"And they were happy ever afterwards," is a romantic ending to a story that many people would not care to miss. One would like to believe it was so, but, unfortunately, married life is seldom like that. Even with the best-intentioned and most adaptable couples, occasions will often arise for disagreement and differences of outlook. When either husband or wife is willing to pay almost any price for peace, or lacks the courage to defend a position, there may be an appearance of harmony. But if the resentment is only hidden, it could be much better to show it, and make a stand for one's self, rather than harbour unkind thoughts which are bound to find an outlet, probably with redoubled force, later.

The first quarrel takes the partners often by surprise. Neither has thought the other capable of such a hard and unbending attitude, and each feels that true love has ceased to exist. Both feel terribly unhappy and begin to wonder if this is the beginning of the end. The husband is puzzled how it comes about that his wife is so pitifully blind to indisputable facts, and the wife may honestly believe her husband is taking delight in being stubborn and tantalizing her. For a few hours they silently reproach each other, both looking the most injured of mortals. The young wife is hoping with all her heart that her tears and choking voice, will win him over, and she will have gained the first battle; while her husband is fully determined to prove his manly wisdom and authority, and trusts this will be a lesson she will remember. Then, when both are beginning to feel guilty and remorseful, and the strain is becoming unbearable, they catch each other's eyes and the next second are locked in a passionate embrace, mutually imploring forgiveness and vowing that they will never have another quarrel. But, of course, it does happen again and probably quite shortly, and this means more makings-up and more futile resolutions. Gradually husband and wife learn each other's tender points, and how to fence without making too dangerous a thrust. If both are tactful and considerate they will be able to ward off many a conflict, but should either try to domineer, there will be few days without a show of temper and an exchange of unkind words.



*Early married life is a time of adjustment and nerves often become strained on both sides. It is far better to quarrel openly and clear the air than allow a wife to nag and a husband to bully and become indifferent to the call of both wife and home.*

Before a young couple have been married many months, they will come to see the impossibility of thinking and acting alike in all things. Probably during their courtship and engagement they felt themselves to be twin souls, but after the first disagreements both have to take stock of the position again. Their love for each other had closed their eyes to many traits which now begin to emerge.

### AGREEING TO DIFFER

Now is the time for both to make a real effort to solve a problem which nine out of ten less courageous lovers shirk. If the man is left to do all the thinking there will be few disputes, but this will mean that what should have been a vital woman becomes a nonentity; so much "luggage" to be placed here "to be called for," or shifted there at will. It is usually the wife, however, who knows better than her partner what she wants out of marriage, and she is not afraid to go straight for her goal. The fatal mistake is for either husband or wife to make a habit of surrendering to the other's demands, or of bringing such pressure to bear that all opposition is crushed or overridden. It is the ground between them they must explore, and fight for inch by inch if necessary, until an understanding is reached. This advice will seldom be found in the old-fashioned textbooks, neither does it express the views of the peace-at-any-price advocates, or the "goody-goody" school.

### HOW TO CLEAR THE AIR

The science of psychology has made tremendous advances of late years, and can prove that disputes which "end" as the result of force or cowardice, are by no means forgotten by the defeated party, but harass and embitter the mind, so that real love has little chance of surviving.

Married couples are certainly not advised to look for opportunities for discord, but once there is a real difference of opinion, they should not rest until they have done their best to find out *why* one reacts in this way and the other in that. Such discussions cannot be carried on without passions rising and tempers being frayed, but they are well worth while and should be illuminating as showing more aspects of the partner's real character. Both man and wife live in a fool's paradise while they continue to play the childish game of hide-and-seek. If each is always wearing a mask it will one day become so fixed and immovable, that the original features of the once-loved mate will be almost irrecoverable. It is not until the partner's motives are known and appreciated, even if not accepted, that husband and wife can agree to go his or her own way in some matters. This they can do without that feeling of bitterness which, in other circumstances, might be shown as ever-growing suspicion, jealousy and mistrust.



### ADJUSTING THE COMMON INCOME

If the sex life in marriage is happy there is but one other major reason for disharmony—money worries. Money problems confront most people at some time or other and some people all the time. But it is particularly unfortunate when they appear soon after a couple have started life together, for they can do much to colour the outlook and influence the relationship. There are husbands who skimp the household money and make their wives beg for every penny for private use, and wives who let a generous allowance slip through their hands like water. The best plan for a newly-married couple is to have a complete understanding from the first as to ours, yours and mine, and to divide the income accordingly; so much for rent, housekeeping, insurances and amusement, the balance to be shared about equally for private use. The young wife appreciates being able to buy little personal necessities and presents now and again. If before marriage she has been a wage-earner she would miss her regular income, and if she should be so unlucky as to have a mean husband there may well be some regrets. Young husbands should beware of deceiving their wives about their earnings and, as a rule, should not inquire too closely how the housekeeping money is spent. If the furniture has been bought on hire-purchase, every effort should be made to clear this debt. A couple who have managed to save a little cash can often pick up real bargains at public auction sales, and add these to the home as required.

Where the income is small it may be difficult to save, but to put aside a few pounds to meet any emergency creates a spirit of confidence and independence. When the wife goes out to work, or takes an active share in her husband's business, she should be credited with all she earns after she has contributed her proportion to the maintenance expenses of the home.

### PROBLEM OF HOME-MAKING

Now that the housing problem is less acute a newly-married couple should not fix upon a residence before considering several important points. If they have saved a little capital, and are likely to remain permanently in one spot, they will not want to pay rent when there is a chance of buying their own house through a building society. When inspecting a likely property it may often be wise to get a friend who knows something of building and local values to make a thorough inspection, but a surveyor will do this for a small fee. He will be able to point out both the advantages and disadvantages of the property and probably many things which the prospective purchaser may have overlooked. Property sometimes depreciates quickly in value, especially when the class of resident in the district begins to change, or further building spoils the outlook, shuts off sun and light, or takes away privacy. These points should



not be forgotten. It is also necessary to make quite sure there are no outstanding charges such as land tax and tithes, drainage or road construction to be met.


Some people who cannot make up their minds if they really want to buy a certain house enter into a contract with the owner to become tenants for a period, with the option of purchase at an agreed price any time after three or six months or a year. This is a wise step and gives a young married couple a chance of finding out if the property meets their requirements in every way. In taking a flat, the wife should bear in mind that if she has a child she will need facilities for storing and moving a perambulator, and for washing and drying baby's clothes. Other things being equal, a small house has many advantages in this respect.

Young couples who are considering "living with mother" for a time after marriage do not always realize the snags in this arrangement. It may prove cheaper in some ways, but some problems will certainly arise that will need all their tact to overcome. Either husband or wife will have two or more persons to consider instead of one, and may not always feel able or willing to please everybody. Not a few unhappy marriages owe their origin to quarrels and disagreements between married lodgers and their parents-in-law. On the whole, it is much better for young people to begin married life in a home of their own, even if it means postponing the wedding for a time.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### IS IT WISE TO POSTPONE A HONEYMOON ?

*I am to be married shortly, but as my future husband cannot get away from his work for more than a few days, he has suggested that we go straight to our home and take our holiday in the summer. Although I am anxious to fall in with his idea, somehow it seems to me that by missing a honeymoon trip, a big part of the romance will be lost. Nearly everybody will ask where we went for the honeymoon, and I shall be reluctant to say nowhere. What do you think ?*

To travel from place to place, and to crowd as much entertainment as possible into two or three days, is not always the best way to begin married life. You will probably get a great deal more out of your holiday by waiting until you have ample time to enjoy it. Why not try a compromise? You could take cheap day trips together to some nearby place of interest, visit the cinema or theatre, and save hotel expenses by returning home at night. 

Furthermore, many young people with limited time and means prefer to set up housekeeping straightway, and plan their holiday

for later on. As you are very much in love, it will not matter greatly where you spend the first days of your married life, and there is a lot to be said for the comfort and cosiness of home surroundings. Some brides are so tired and in need of rest after strenuous weeks of preparation that they fail to get any real satisfaction out of a short and hurried honeymoon. There should be great fun, besides, in planning your first holiday with your husband, and much joy in looking forward to this. You could easily explain the circumstances to your friends who will be quite ready to understand the reasons for the delay.

### MY WIFE IS UNCULTURED—CAN I IMPROVE HER ?

*I realized when I married that my girl had few brilliant mental attainments. She had no interest in literature, nor had she even a parrot-knowledge of the names of writers or the classic books of the past. She is a product of the film era, and I have come to the realization that I have married one who comes within the category of the lightheaded. She cannot be serious for more than a minute at a time, and I get no intelligent response to my suggestions. Do you think that, with careful handling, I could introduce her into the ways of thought; to good literature; to an appreciation of the best things of life—wean her, so to speak, from the dross? The thought that I might be ashamed of her one day appals me. What do you advise ?*

The best thing for you to do is to concentrate on some of your wife's good qualities and help her to develop these to the full. It is extremely unlikely you will ever be able to "cultivate" her in the way you wish. There is a very large class of women who take no interest whatever in what men call culture. Even when they do appear to be interested in art, literature or classical music, it is usually to further some scheme at the back of their minds. Or, as has been said by a wit, "When women talk of astronomy, they are thinking of the astronomer." A love of good books and literature and the fine things of life is *inborn* and cannot be superimposed like a coat of varnish. A fact that many psychologists have noted is that when a young girl has had her interests centred mainly on the emotions, there is little prospect of intellectual things making any appeal to her.

If your wife is of a gay spirit, has a nice manner with people, is efficient in the house, and is willing to allow you to go your way with your books, you should consider yourself lucky. She may be your opposite in temperament and still prove very necessary to your life as time goes on. It is as a mother she will give proof of her worth. If she excels here, you will not want to exchange her for the most "educated" woman of your acquaintance, or indeed in the whole world.

## WHY IS COURTSHIP SOMETIMES HAPPIER THAN MARRIAGE ?

*Can you explain to me a curious fact ? I was engaged for three years and during the whole of this time was exceedingly happy. I looked forward to my marriage and believed I was about to enter upon an ideal existence. Now, after having been married for little more than a year, I am obliged to confess to myself in my quieter moments that wedlock has not given me all the joy I anticipated. I can point to no special grievance, for my wife is a good partner; but it is as I say, and I am at a loss for an explanation.*

You are probably one of those men blessed (or cursed) with a vivid imagination. While you were engaged you lived in a world of romantic dreams, where there was nothing to disturb your mental pictures of a blissful future. If your fiancée was also of a romantic type your fancies may have been so reinforced that paradise seemed just round the corner. Enjoying your courtship so much, you may have made it an end in itself. And perhaps, in your secret heart, you were not quite so much in a hurry to change your single state after all.

Fundamentally, you must realize that courtship and marriage are two unlike experiences and cannot be compared. You made a mistake in letting courtship run away with your entire emotional stock and not reserving some of it for married life. Now you find yourself confronted with a world of facts which is of a drabber colour than the material of your earlier fantasies. In this life one has to get down eventually, to "brass tacks" in the handling of the emotions, as well as in dealing with more material things. You may recover some part of your former happiness when you recognize and can profit by this fact.

## HOW CAN I MAKE MY WIFE HAPPY ?

*When I married my wife, who was an only child, her parents said to me "Of course, you'll make her happy!" Several of the relatives said the same thing, so I supposed it to be just another of those stock expressions which we all trot out for want of something better to say. We have just celebrated the first anniversary of our wedding and I am taking stock of the position. Curiously enough, many things I thought would "make her happy" had the opposite effect, whilst others which, to tell the truth, were done as much to please myself, seemed to meet with her favour. Do you think there is anything in trying to make a woman happy? Or should husband and wife go their own ways and just show ordinary consideration for each other?*

This question opens up a very big problem and must be considered with great care. Many a fond husband has considered it his life's

work to make his partner happy, spare her every trial, and bolster her up on all occasions. And in the end, what was accepted at first, and appreciated as a favour, soon became a necessity. In most marriages there is one partner who is more ready to do the giving—at least, to begin with. Sometimes it is the doting wife who runs to her husband's side if he as much as sneezes, and at other times an over-solicitous husband dances attendance and fusses around until his wife is exasperated. Marriage should be a natural relationship and not a constant attempt to supply some deficiency, which the mate lacks and will never trouble to acquire on his or her own account, if it can be made good for the asking. It is more than doubtful if either husband or wife can succeed in making a weaker partner happy for any length of time by a deliberate effort.

It is because a man is often ignorant of his wife's real nature and needs that his efforts to keep her happy meet with but small result. Some husbands give their wives gifts of money, and then tell them how they are to spend the cash. Others allow their partners a room of their own for private work and then proceed to decorate it for them.

Or, if they are well off, they may give them a car and put a limit to the mileage and the times it may be used. The *real secret of a woman's happiness* is the freedom she enjoys to live her own life and to do things in her own way. She wants the liberty to run her house in her own way, to look after her children as she thinks best, and to make friends and meet the people she wants to know. In support of this ideal it is necessary for her to feel that she has the love of her husband, family and friends. All these things she is prepared to enjoy on what is often the smallest of scales, and, so long as she is not interfered with, will raise no complaint.

In building up around her her own particular atmosphere the average woman finds her greatest comfort. To her husband many of her pleasures may seem small and even childish—such as wandering around a sixpenny store for an entire afternoon in search of two or three particular articles to match something at home—but if he is a wise man he will make no comment. Every husband who has put aside his masculine prejudices and come to see and believe that a wife must live a life of her own to be happy, will stop worrying about what he must do, or give, or say, to bring about that desired effect. So long as his own affairs suffer no *serious* inconvenience, his watch-word to his spouse will be “Carry on!”

## SHOULD MY HUSBAND OBJECT TO DANCING?

*I love dancing; my husband hates it. But he has never danced, so that his dislike is not founded on actual experience. Despite my assurances that he would get to love it he says that dances are only occasions for “nit-wits” to meet, and that dancing*

*men are nothing more than "lounge lizards." The fact that several of our most respected neighbours dance does not alter his decision. Some time back he gave me permission—in a churlish spirit, it is true—to accompany my brother and his friend to a ball. Now my husband is constantly twitting me about liking other men best, which he knows is untrue. Please advise me. I am most miserable.*

It is a pity you did not have some understanding on this point before you were married. Dancing of the right sort is a very healthy exercise and is beneficial in every way. At the same time, there are some people, more puritanical in outlook, who regard it as a wile of the devil to ensnare innocent souls. Of course, it can be abused, just like any sport or amusement, but this is no reason for condemning it.

Dancers and non-dancers can usually be placed in two somewhat sharply divided classes. Those who dislike it can find many reasons for their opinions, especially if someone near to them wants to attend a ball. There is no use in arguing then, about the merits or demerits of dancing, for there is something much deeper in question. Feelings of jealousy and suspicion are often the motives influencing such an outlook.

Many girls who formerly were passionately fond of dancing seem to lose a great part of their interest after marriage. But you have evidently retained yours, and there is no reason why you should not enjoy yourself occasionally. Your husband's attitude is unreasonable; the more so as you have expressed the satisfaction it would give to have him accompany you. But it is doubtful if you will ever succeed in changing his point of view.

If he objects to dancing in public, why not make an attempt to teach him at home? If ever he became fairly proficient you could invite a few friends, and so gradually induce him to branch out.

Summed up, your present position amounts to this—you can please your husband by keeping away from dances, or risk a serious breach with him by going your own way. The measure of your love and understanding should determine the outcome.

### **MY WIFE HAS STRANGE IDEAS ABOUT SEX—WHAT SHOULD I DO ?**

*I am rather at a loss to explain my position to you. I have been married for two years but could not honestly say that I am entirely happy. My wife, it is true, does everything in the house to make me comfortable, and is not inquisitive and does not blame me when I return home late on occasions. In fact she tries to meet my wants in every way—except one. She has the most curious notions about sex relationship, and thinks there is something all wrong about it. I have tried to reason with her but without*



*result. Her mother separated from her husband when my wife was a small child. My mother-in-law is a difficult woman to get on with and we are not over friendly. Can you give me any explanation and advice?*

It is more than probable that her mother is largely responsible for your wife's unfortunate attitude. There are some neurotic women who, finding no satisfaction in their own married life, begin to decry sex in all its aspects. It is little wonder that a child brought up in this atmosphere, and hearing sex condemned continually, should begin to form her own ideas. Before marriage she may succeed in hiding her view to some extent, especially if her fiancé is a man of fine sentiments and anxious not to offend in any way. But later all the inhibitions will begin to appear and spoil any chance of mutual happiness.

Many husbands find themselves in similar positions to yours, and in nearly every case the wife has been prejudiced in her early and impressionable youth by ignorant or malicious people. You have no easy task ahead of you and must be prepared to exercise infinite patience and self-control. You may congratulate yourself upon finding your partner so anxious to meet all your other needs, for this shows affection for you, and gives hope that eventually you may bring her to see how foolish and ignorant is her present outlook.

"Hurry slowly" is sound advice here. Years of mischievous teaching cannot be wiped out in a day. Don't force the subject upon her in season and out, but look for openings and profit by them. Try to interest her in a sensible book dealing with sex problems. Your greatest hope, however, will be in the further development of her esteem for you, and her increasing wish to bring all the happiness she can into your life.

### HOW CAN I CURE MY WIFE'S LAZINESS?

*"You really don't mind, dear, do you?" This is the phrase I have been hearing from my wife several times a day almost from our honeymoon. Before we were married she appeared to be trim and smart, and I looked upon her with pride. But almost as soon as we had settled in our home she began to appear at the breakfast table with her hair in curlers and wearing a big working apron. It was soon "you don't mind" for a number of things—when the meal was cold, or when something was overlooked, or when I had to do a job myself. I have dropped hints on several occasions but nothing much has changed. What should I do?*

It would pay you better to make a definite protest than to keep giving hints. The resentment you feel, if bottled up too long, will explode one day with perhaps disastrous results. The next time you have a

genuine reason to complain of slackness on your wife's part, in her dress for example, tell her how proud you are when she is in a costume you like and how depressed it makes you feel to see her untidy. Use tact, but make your point. If a quarrel cannot be avoided, at least she will have no further doubt about your opinions. There are more indirect ways of getting results if you feel timid about offending her. For example, you could present your partner with some artistic overalls, or other articles of clothing which appeal to you. She could hardly refuse to wear these. An occasional well-timed reference to another lady's becoming manner of dressing has been known to have effect, but considerable tact must be exercised. Wives who slack after marriage, or who fulfil their duties in a half-hearted fashion, have been badly trained as children. They are lacking in concentration; are always looking for an easy way out and for someone to support them. Perhaps so much effort has been spent in putting on a good face during courtship that there is a collapse once they think they have achieved marriage. For the sake of any children you may have, you should take a firm stand without delay. It should be easier for your wife to make an effort to pull herself together now, than in later years when habit and a growing indifference will have her firmly in their grip.

#### HOW SHOULD I TREAT AN INCONSIDERATE HUSBAND?

*I have been married three years and am afraid something has gone wrong with my marriage. For the first year or so we were fairly happy, although my husband is of a very determined nature and has little patience. When at all checked, or thwarted in any way he soon loses his temper, and can be almost brutal at times. There are days of course, when a woman wants more peace than usual in her life, and it is often on these occasions he chooses to be on his worst behaviour. I have tried to reason with him but without much effect. Can you tell me what I should do?*

You would possibly have noticed that during your engagement your future husband was not always too considerate of your finer feelings. This type of men are ruled more by their headstrong, passionate natures than by their hearts. So long as they can have everything they want, all is well; but if they are obliged to wait for anything, or postpone an urgent desire, they begin to make trouble—just as they did when they were children. Your husband probably sulks and tries to upset everybody when he is frustrated, and declares he is ill-treated. The more you humour him the worse his condition is likely to grow. Your only hope of an improvement is to face up to him and have an immediate understanding. It is funny how quickly a certain type of blusterer crumples up when he sees he can no longer play his game. At heart this type is generally lacking in courage, and a snarl can soon change to a whine.

First of all, you should ask yourself to what lengths you are prepared to go to bring about a change in your circumstances. Some people have to suffer before they can force themselves to make any move in self-defence. It is useless to state your point of view and then withdraw the next minute. This would only encourage your husband to continue in the bad old way. Having once made up your mind tell him you will stand no more of his nonsense and that if he persists in his selfishness you will consider yourself at liberty to act as you think best. When he sees you are fully determined, he may think twice before forcing you to extremes. Life under almost any conditions is better than with a husband who is entirely indifferent to anything or any one but his own needs.

## CHAPTER 11

### PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH

#### WHICH IS THE BEST AGE TO HAVE CHILDREN ?

**T**HIS is a question of the utmost importance to young parents. If put in another form, "to have the *best* children?" the problem is still more complicated. Confucius, the Chinese sage, was the result of a marriage between a widower of seventy and a girl of seventeen; the world-renowned poet and philosopher Goethe, was the child of an elderly man and a young girl. Both Confucius and Goethe lived to a great age and were virile in mind and body. At almost all ages at which women are capable of bearing children, healthy offspring have been born, the fathers of which have varied greatly in years, for in essence it all depends upon sound heredity and careful nurture. The children of seemingly lusty young parents have often been weaklings, where the infants of a middle-aged couple have survived and thrived.

In some of the American states they have tried to compile statistics on the subject and recently the New York State Health Department set their experts to discover the ideal age for parents. Their careful researches seemed to show that mothers between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-six have the healthiest babies, and that the ideal age for the father is between twenty-five and twenty-nine. These children are found to be stronger and less susceptible to disease and have a much better chance of surviving the first few months of life. Babies born to mothers under twenty-one and over forty-one face a twenty-five per cent higher death rate than the children born to parents of the ideal age. The offspring of very young mothers are subjected to special risks.

On the other hand, it is far from certain that these figures would

be confirmed in this country where thousands of girls between sixteen and nineteen give birth to children. One curious fact has often been noticed. The children born to the young wives of middle-aged husbands are more often boys and, as a rule, are possessed of more than average intelligence.

It is perhaps well for a young couple to have their children early in life, while they can still enter fully into all their games and sports. When a woman in the forties has a child, it means that she will have to sacrifice a great part of her freedom until an age when she may no longer feel inclined to resume an active social life; but provided man and wife have a sane mental outlook, enjoy good health and come from good stock, the chances of rearing a healthy child at any age are good.

### SPACING THE FAMILY

It is advisable there should be an interval of at least two years between births. This gives the mother a chance to build up her system and to enjoy a measure of freedom. She is also able to devote an increased amount of care to the young child at a time when it will benefit most by it, and to share in some of her husband's diversions. Frequent pregnancies impose too great a strain upon any but the strongest of women and may not always result in the healthiest of offspring. But, if a second or third child is desired there should not be too long an interval, as otherwise there will be less chance of the children becoming companions and helping in the development of each other's characters.

Furthermore, there is a real danger in deferring unduly the birth of a second child, for either through the long practice of birth control or because of some condition of the wife, she may not be able to conceive at the hoped-for time. Nature can be exceedingly capricious. This can be a great disappointment and should be guarded against. If through some mishap at confinement, or through some subsequent trouble, it is advised there should be no further children for some years, it is most important that the couple should consult their doctor as to the best preventive methods. No squeamish fears should deter them from doing this, for prudery here may be purchased at a ruinous cost.

### PROBLEMS OF PREGNANCY

The first pregnancy is a great event in the life of every young married woman. Now, if ever, is the time husband and wife must co-operate so that the infant has the greatest chance of being born healthy and vigorous. The young wife will have suspected her condition by the non-appearance of her period at the usual interval. She will also note that her breasts are beginning to swell and the nipples to darken. Another sign is morning sickness which at times

can be very distressing. Some pregnant women are martyrs to this whilst others are hardly troubled at all. Sometimes this sickness arises partly through fear and nervousness, but it can also be caused by changes in the chemical constituents of the body which induce a sort of poisoning. Reassurance and encouragement are helpful at this time and, as a practical measure, quick relief is often obtained by the use of smelling salts or by small doses of peppermint. As a rule, the discomfort gradually passes off; but when it is persistent and severe a doctor should be consulted.

It is now that a young couple can fall into one of two great errors. They can look upon the wife's condition as akin to illness, and become over-anxious and dread lest something goes wrong. Possibly they may be afraid of taking exercise, or of doing other things they imagine might be harmful, but which, if they only knew, would be rather the reverse. On the other hand, they may hold that now there is no longer need to take precautions a larger measure of sexual licence can be claimed.

### WOMAN'S RESERVE OF STRENGTH

The truth of the matter is that the average young woman should enjoy better health during pregnancy than at almost any other time of her life. Nature seems to provide her with great reserves of strength, and in many instances with an enhanced appreciation of the beauties of Nature and the pleasures of intellectual pursuits. She should carry on with her usual household duties, taking care, however, during the first three months to rest when she feels short of breath or fatigued. It would be well for her to pay short visits to friends where that is possible, to see interesting plays, to read good books and spend her time preparing for the baby's coming. She should discount at once the old women's tales about "influences" and signs and portents. There will always be a certain class of people who take a delight in sensational and malicious gossip and who get pleasure from suggesting morbid topics to impressionable young people. Such a type are a public danger and should be resolutely shunned.

Many young husbands are in real need of guidance during their wife's first pregnancy. For example, they may find that she seems averse to the sexual relationship, and when this is so her desires should be respected. Some authorities would prohibit intercourse during the entire period, but this could only be beneficial when the wife was in complete agreement with this decision, for modern psychology has disclosed the truth that neither giving nor withholding has any great value when the mind is not in accord with the body. There can be only one rule: the wife should take the lead at this time and her normal wishes should be followed. It is well to add that gentleness and discretion should always be shown.



Selfishness in any form may easily be disastrous. A first pregnancy provides a fine opportunity of testing self-discipline and control, especially on the part of the husband. There are almost certain to be times when the young wife will need sympathy and confirmation of her husband's love and understanding. Little bouts of depression should never alarm him, neither should he be surprised by an occasional preference for certain strange foods and a dislike of others. Some nervous women show hysterical symptoms, and others try to withdraw altogether from society; some seem filled with an inexhaustible supply of energy, while still others ask for nothing better than to rest the greater part of the day. It is up to the husband here to humour his wife as much as possible and to refuse to get "rattled" when her ideas appear strange and even eccentric. The contrariness of women may puzzle him more than ever during these trying months, but he should recognize the big issues involved and do nothing which might hurt or cause his wife sorrow. Complete goodwill between the partners at this time is worth all the regimes, rules and regulations that doctors can devise. During pregnancy, too, a husband should see that his wife consults her doctor regularly or attends a pre-natal clinic. The assurance that all is well will instil confidence and help things all round, and there are a few minor physical ailments during pregnancy which may become serious if they are not attended to.

### ADVICE FOR THE PREGNANT WIFE

"Of course, my dear, now there are two to feed you must eat more." This is a well-meant but ill-advised counsel based on the common mistake that the body's nourishment depends upon the amount of food swallowed at a meal. A too generous diet is seldom properly digested, puts a heavy strain upon the eliminative organs, and, if continued for long, can begin to poison the system. A pregnant woman who wishes to eat wisely in order to benefit her coming baby and herself should be guided by the results of long-tested experiments. These show that the ordinary diet of meat, potatoes and cereals does not contain enough calcium, and as the infant is draining this from her system her teeth may decay rapidly and give trouble. The diet should be light and consist mainly of uncooked salads and fruits and properly prepared vegetables. Boiled fish may be taken occasionally and a little fowl, if it can be afforded. Soups, smoked foods, sausages, all kinds of pork and red meat should be avoided. This is the successful regime which hundreds of mothers have adopted on the advice of the well-known Deptford (London) Borough Maternity Home and other similar institutions. It has been proved that after this diet labour is easier and confinement attended by far less danger of complications arising from inflammatory troubles.

The date of birth may be reckoned by counting two hundred and eighty days from the onset of the last menstruation. If at any time during pregnancy there is bleeding of any sort, a doctor should be consulted without delay. The patient should rest and keep the feet well up. A miscarriage, despite any opinion to the contrary, needs as careful attention as a confinement, and the after-care of the wife is just as important. If, during the months of pregnancy the ordinary mode of life has been sensible and happy, and undue excitements have been avoided, no complications need be feared in over ninety per cent of confinements. Once more it should be stressed that the mental attitude will be of the biggest help, for faith and a calm assurance are always of the greatest importance.

### SPECIAL WARNING

One special note of warning should be added here. A pregnant woman should on no account do anything which may cause an abortion or tend to bring about a miscarriage. The lifting of heavy weights and the pushing of lawn-mowers and garden rollers should be forbidden. By using strong drugs, or by resorting to mechanical interference of any sort, the gravest dangers may be incurred and life even imperilled. Insidious diseases, and troubles of the womb and reproductive organs, as well as glandular disturbances, are often the unfortunate result of trying to cause an abortion.

Many pregnant women, finding themselves in an unfavourable situation, are tempted to turn to advertisements which hint at offering relief. These should always be told that in a big majority of cases these drugs are not to be relied upon and can be most prejudicial to health.

### IS PAINLESS CHILDBIRTH POSSIBLE ?

Since the days when chloroform was first used to alleviate the pains of childbirth, scientific research has been tireless in the attempt to discover a perfect anæsthetic which will be harmless to both mother and child. Numerous experiments have been carried out, ranging from hypnotism to twilight sleep, but in each case there has been some factor (often expense or constitutional debility) which has prevented the method from being widely adopted. It is claimed, however, that an apparatus has recently been perfected which will make motherhood safer and easier, even for the poorest woman.

At a recent Public Health Exhibition in London this was demonstrated and explained. It is described as a British made gas-air analgesia apparatus. The gas is self-administered. The patient is not supplied with it until she inhales. There is no danger of taking too much as when the first stage of anæsthesia is produced the patient automatically drops the mouthpiece. When in an analgesic state the patient retains perfect reason and can walk about. Enough

nitrous oxygen and air to last thirty-six hours can be supplied for three and sixpence. This apparatus is already in use in some maternity wards and is proving of immense assistance. If everything which is claimed for it is substantiated, it should soon be generally available for confinements and will do much to restore confidence and dispel fear.

### PROBLEMS ARISING AFTER BIRTH

The months succeeding the birth of a child may prove exceptionally trying for both husband and wife. The young mother will have to recuperate her strength and, if she is suckling her child, take care that her general health is maintained. It will be some six weeks or two months after a normal confinement before she is fit to resume her marital life, but in a majority of cases it would be wiser to defer intercourse for yet a few weeks more. A young wife who has to meet the combined needs of a baby and an inconsiderate husband is often subjected to a strain that can adversely affect her health. Probably her nerves will suffer first, and if the mate is persistently thoughtless she may become irritable and fretful. The fear of another pregnancy makes some young mothers almost hostile to the sex relationship for a time, and great care should be observed to prevent this becoming a fixation. A husband should remember that as much foresight and consideration are needed during the months immediately following the confinement as in the months immediately before it. A crying baby also will not help to a good night's rest, so that husbands who need sound sleep to enable them to carry through their day's work should, if possible, have separate rooms until conditions are better.

Many young couples are under the impression that because the monthly period of a nursing mother fails to appear it is impossible for her to become pregnant. While it is true that the probability is lessened it is by no means certain she will not conceive again. There are many instances of a second child arriving within a year of the first, and if a young wife finds herself pregnant again the compulsory weaning of her infant may prove a severe handicap to the child. As previously stated, under ordinary circumstances it is better for a year or two to elapse before having another child.

### BIRTH CONTROL FOR MARRIED COUPLES

It is only during the present century that the new science of sexology has claimed almost universal attention. As far back as history stretches, sex and love have been discussed in every quarter of the world, but it has remained for scientists of proved skill and insight to collect and classify thousands of facts concerning this elusive subject and to question numerous witnesses to be able to formulate laws and to draw certain valuable conclusions. The results of these researches are now largely available to the public.

When the deliberate limitation of births was first advocated many public bodies in this country opposed the idea. Now it is not unusual to hear high church dignitaries and members of the learned professions openly advise the practice. Books on the subject are no longer suppressed and are recommended by people who know of the terrible conditions existing a century ago when nearly half the children of large families were doomed to die at birth or early in their childhood.

Whether birth control should be practised or not must always remain a matter for individual discretion. A person will be guided by his religious, social or economic views. Today literature on the subject is easily obtained and may be ordered through any newsagent or bookseller and, so far has the spread of contraceptive teaching advanced during the past ten years, that birth control clinics have been established where instruction can be given to suitable applicants. It is predicted that before the end of the next decade no hospital will be without teaching facilities, but for the present the majority of doctors are willing to place their experience at the disposal of responsible patients.

### IS BIRTH CONTROL SURE ?

As yet, it cannot be said that any one of the contraceptive methods in popular use is absolutely certain. Pregnancy occasionally results when intercourse has been attempted under the most approved control conditions. This is sometimes the result of accident, oversight or carelessness, or by some defect in the apparatus. Contraceptives range in cost from a few pence to as many shillings and may be purchased openly at most chemists, but the public should be warned strongly against the use of cheap paste or cream spermicides which for the most part are useless and may cause intense irritation to the reproductive organs. Medical opinion is almost unanimous in advocating the use of the condom (male sheath) or the female vaginal diaphragm (rubber or skin hemisphere). The latter requires instruction in its use. As a further safeguard a spermicidal jelly is recommended.

Of late years, however, some specialists have arrived at a conclusion that there are certain days in a woman's monthly cycle when conception is not possible. It is necessary to say at once that this contention still lacks absolute proof. These doctors maintain, however, that the three days following menstruation and the week preceding the period are absolutely sterile. But the warning is added that the method is unsafe in the case of a woman whose periods are apt to be irregular.

One fact which is known, however, is that the mid-menstrual days are the most favourable for conception, and those who desire children should bear this in mind. Taking advantage of the "safe"



days may recommend itself to those who have religious scruples against the use of contraceptives, but it will imply a considerable measure of restraint and self-control.

### WHERE SHOULD BABY BE BORN ?

Most young wives like to think of their children as being born in their own homes. Apart from sentimental reasons, and the near presence of the husband and relatives, the known surroundings give the young mother a feeling of assurance which is very helpful at this time. But a confinement at home may cause a dislocation of family life which can be very upsetting. This is so to an even greater extent with the birth of later children, when the mother has no trusted person to whom she can confide her little ones. There is also the added anxiety in remote country districts that the services of a doctor might not be available if urgently required. Arrangements must be made, too, with a nurse or midwife, and everything prepared for their arrival.

A good nursing home will save many of these disadvantages, but the fees will range between four and eight guineas a week—a sum beyond the purse of most families. Expert attendance can be counted upon and the comfort of mother and baby assured. A poor woman can apply to the almoner of the nearest hospital for particulars of admission, or to the secretary of a pre-natal clinic. If there are no beds available, she may be referred to the county hospital for free admission. A patient of moderate means may sometimes enter the maternity ward of her local hospital upon payment of an agreed fee.

### NAMING THE CHILD

In choosing a name for a child, it is as well to remember that he or she has to approve of it later. A young person is never grateful to his parents for calling him a ludicrous name which can only make him embarrassed. In past generations it was common to burden a poor child with an absurd string of names and then call him "Bill" to the day of his death. Nowadays luckily, however, this fashion has passed and plain short names are popular.

Except for family reasons of a special kind, it is better to give the child two names at most. This saves the chance of complications. Names which date, and highfalutin names, should be barred. During the Napoleonic wars, hundreds of boys were named Wellington, and there may still be Gladstone Smiths and Palmerston Browns surviving. Some parents when choosing a name try to find one which cannot easily be abbreviated or distorted. A little thought here may save the future schoolchild many a teasing. Unusual names have the peculiar disadvantage that should a character of national and dubious reputation be so called, its possessors would not



be anxious to share the reflected glory. Perhaps the best plan is to call a child by a name which carries with it some happy association, or may have some special significance for one of the parents. If a second name is wished, it is a good plan to give the child the maiden name of the mother.

### DO CHILDREN SEAL MARRIAGE ?

Although childless marriages do not always contribute to happiness, and the advent of a wished-for baby may bring great joy to a home, there are instances where the birth of a child has made a great difference in the attitude of the parents to each other. There are wives of such jealous natures that they resent admiration being given to the baby instead of to themselves. Under no circumstances are they content to share, or be counted second. Should the husband, as is natural, give a proof of his affection for the child, his partner may accuse him of loving it better than herself, and make this a pretext for quarrelling. When this happens the wife may appear to take no particular pride in her infant and may leave it to the care of others. She can also punish her husband by refusing all his approaches. If the childhood history of this type of woman could be investigated it would probably show she had always been jealous of her brothers and sisters, and eager to put herself first at every opportunity. Other wives who have had reason to be dissatisfied with their married lives, because of some defect in their husband's character, welcome the birth of a child as giving them the opportunity to centre their affections elsewhere. More and more, as the child grows up, does the husband recede into the background, and any claim he may make upon his offspring's love is hotly denied. The problems of such a household are disastrous to the well-being of the unfortunate child.

A third type of wife who, up to her confinement, has given her husband no cause for complaint, may now begin to neglect his needs and desires so that he is apt to feel like a lodger in his own house. Such a woman may show no direct ill-will to her mate, and is perhaps not altogether aware of her attitude. She has simply lost interest in married life and would be happier back with her parents with the child in her arms. With these women it seems as if the birth of a child was the alpha and omega of life's ambition, and, having attained this, they want to be left alone, particularly as far as further matrimonial obligations are concerned. Happily, in the ordinary way, children tend to cement the bond between husband and wife, and may be the means of keeping them together and of causing past quarrels to be healed. The average couple are ready to make great sacrifices for their family, and in this knowledge their love for each other is confirmed and strengthened. Personal troubles and differences are brushed aside so that the children shall not suffer.

In later years, family respect often keeps the man to the path of virtue when temptation looms up in any form.

### PROBLEM OF CHILDLESS COUPLE

It is a great disappointment to both husband and wife when they want a child badly and the woman is to all appearances barren. Here they may well ask each other at what age it is useless to hope any longer. It is impossible to say with certainty, for until a woman has passed the child-bearing age—any time up to about forty-six years—there is a prospect, even if a remote one, of her upsetting all calculations. The majority of young wives conceive within the first three years of marriage if no birth control precautions have been taken during this period, but there are cases on record of supposedly barren women giving birth to one or more healthy children after twenty years of married life. First births after ten or twelve years are by no means uncommon, and there are also records of women who conceived for the first time when they were nearing fifty.

If, after four years of married life, a young wife still remains sterile, it would be well to consult a gynæcologist to ascertain by examination if either husband or wife are at fault. Sometimes a slight adjustment may be necessary which, of no great importance in itself, will, if not made, leave a condition which effectively prevents consummation. It happens sometimes, for example, that after a change of residence, a long sea voyage or a lengthy stay in a mountainous country, a first pregnancy follows. A shock or even an illness have also been known to be causes. On the other hand, certain medical men hold that the absence of sexual pleasure, or excessive intercourse, or the abuse of contraceptives, may predispose a woman to barrenness, and it is also claimed that when one of the partners suffers from melancholia or habitual depression the chances of parenthood are considerably lessened.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### MAY NOT BEAR A CHILD—SHOULD I ADOPT ONE ?

*My husband won't agree to my suggestion that we should have a child. He says that he does not feel equal to the strain of seeing me suffer. Despite the fact that I have explained that the "suffering" is a normal burden for women, he will not see this. He is most kind and attentive, but I do so want a child to mother and, in the circumstances, have considered the thought of adoption. My husband is agreeable to this course. What do you think about it ?*

Presuming you are in good health and normally strong, your husband—whether he is aware of it or not—is taking a foolish attitude, and

a cowardly one, to boot. Cowardly because, in the first place, he should be man enough to fulfil the obligations of his marriage and, secondly, because he is content that some other mother shall bear a child for you to look after. A woman's deepest reproductive instinct—unlike a man's—is not fully satisfied with the act of intercourse. Her body demands that she shall conceive and bear children, and when the body is frustrated over a long period trouble in some form or other may very possibly arise. So that although an adopted child could satisfy your emotional needs to some extent, you might not escape the penalty nature often exacts from childless women.

Your husband should know that under modern conditions normal childbirth is not only safe but can be almost painless, provided the woman follows a right diet during pregnancy and takes advantage of the latest anæsthetic aids at the confinement (*see* page 216). There may be some more obscure reason for your husband's attitude—probably one he does not quite realize himself. There are men of a jealous disposition who cannot bear the thought of even a child of their own coming between them and their wives. They are not willing for any affection to be shared by another. Should you adopt a child, you may have to be on your guard against this. You should talk the matter over with your partner and bring to his notice all the benefits children confer upon both wife and husband, and how their lack, especially in middle age, is often the indirect cause of much unhappiness. You could hardly love an adopted child as your own, and your regret at having no family might prejudice you against your husband in the years to come.

### HOW CAN I HELP A SORROWING WIFE ?

*I am very disturbed about my wife and her present state of health. A few months ago our first baby was still-born and the misery attendant upon this has seriously affected my wife's nerves. She is constantly moping when I am at home, and takes no interest whatever in the things going on around her. I feel that now she is bored with me, and her tongue has, at times, a touch of acid, which hurts me, for I have always thought of her first and last. Her moods are of the uncontrollable kind, and I am the sufferer. The doctor says "she will pull round in due course" but there is no sign of this at present. Please advise me from your experience what to do to help her in her great trouble.*

The greatest help to your wife for a time will be the maintenance of the generous and thoughtful spirit of which your letter gives evidence. In married life most people get an equal share of joy and sorrow. To some it comes at one time and to some at another, but very few escape entirely. It is true, also, that it is usually those nearest to us who make us suffer most, and help to

develop the deeper aspects of our natures. To lose a first-born child is a dreadful blow to any woman, and cannot but affect her in some way. It may be a poor consolation to add that your wife might have felt the loss still more had the child lived for a few months and won all her affection. The doctor is quite right when he says that time is the great factor in her recovery. Time usually heals most sorrows that can be healed, although when we are in the first stages of suffering it does not seem as if we should ever be able to forget.

Whilst your wife is still sorrowing you must not expect her to show much cheerfulness or interest in anything. Don't *try* to cheer her up, but be on the watch for the slightest opening which will give you the chance of suggesting something helpful. As soon as she expresses a wish for a change of any sort, grant it at once if it is in your power. If you can move your residence you might consider placing her in a new environment. It is true we should 'walk through ghosts' but it is better to avoid them if we can. As soon as you can get away together, take a holiday in entirely new surroundings. You should not allow yourself to be upset by your wife's occasional bitterness. Words do not mean the same to women as to men. Your partner feels, perhaps unconsciously, that *someone* should be blamed for the loss of her child, and as you are the nearest to her, you get the brunt of her displeasure. Later she may remember your unselfishness, and this should increase her love and respect for you.

### SHOULD "GIVING A CHILD A CHANCE" MEAN NO MORE CHILDREN?

*There is one child of our marriage, a bonny boy of three. My wife is a very healthy woman but somewhat ambitious and anxious to keep up a position of sorts. I have suggested that we might have another child while we are both comparatively young and my position is fairly secure. My wife, however, says this would be an extra expense and mean that our standard of living would have to be lowered; and that we ought to give our boy a chance. What do you think?*

Modern psychologists regard the "old, old story" about giving the first child a chance as so much nonsense. It is the stand-by of every doubting husband and wife fearful of adding to their responsibilities. If the parents really mean to give their first-born a chance, they must take care to provide a brother or sister within three years of his birth. This is *the* chance the first-born child requires, and by which he will most profit. Some psychologists have gone so far as to say that one child is worse than no child, and certainly if the parents lose an only child, the repercussion on their lives can be very serious, especially for the mother.

It is then that other children bring the greatest consolation. One child in a family seldom gets an all-round chance to develop. He is pitted unevenly against adults in the home, and it is only in competition with another child that a child can find his own level. You should put these facts to your wife and try to win her over to your outlook.

### SHOULD A MOTHER PUT A BABY OUT TO NURSE ?

*I have been happily married for a few years, but my wife appears to be bitten with a craze for saving money and wants to put our baby out to nurse so that she can go to work herself and thereby increase our balance at the bank. Do you think I ought to agree to this?*

No; that is unless you have reason to believe your baby is being neglected in some way, and getting very little affection from its mother. In that case the child might be happier with a kindly foster-mother. A young mother whose financial circumstances make it unnecessary for her to take up outside work has little genuine mother love if she adopts this course and neglects her child. It is likely that vanity and greed in some form are her principal motives, and that she lacks the capacity for deep maternal feeling.

There is a school of thought which holds that as very few mothers are capable of bringing up their children properly, the majority of babies, soon after birth, should be placed in institutions where they would receive a strictly mechanical training. This somewhat cold-blooded experiment has not yet been tried out on a big scale, and it is more than doubtful if the results would justify expectations. A very vital link exists between a mother and her infant, and if this is broken at too early an age the results may be disastrous to the future well-being of the child. On the other hand, if a mother puts the material welfare of the home first, and is not anxious to be saddled with the responsibility of looking after a family, it is hardly wise to compel her to do so. Your best course is to talk the matter over with your wife in a reasonable spirit, and perhaps arrive at a compromise of sorts. You may be able to get a capable help for part of the day, which would release your wife for other things.

### MY SISTER WANTS TO ADOPT MY CHILD— OUGHT I TO AGREE ?

*We have two little girls, one four years old and the other two and I am expecting another baby quite soon now. My sister, who is married and has no children, is anxious to adopt our eldest girl. I have thought the matter over very carefully and think it would be a good thing to let her go, as they are comfortably off.*



*and I know she would be dearly loved and cared for. But my husband's people are standing in the way. They say that I can't love my husband if I wish to part with his child, and they are influencing him. But all I am anxious for is my child's future good. We are poor and soon things will be worse. It will be terribly hard to part with my elder girl, but I feel sure she will thank me later on. What is your opinion?*

This is a difficult position for you. At a first glance it might appear that it would be an all-round advantage for your sister to adopt the elder girl. But it is not at all certain this arrangement would work either for the child's future good or to your ultimate benefit. The first snag in the proposal is the apparent unwillingness of your husband to give his consent. This is quite understandable, for the love of a first-born child is usually deep in a man. If you had no legal agreement with your sister, it is likely your husband might take the child away after some years, and that might cause quarrelling all round. Should a binding agreement exist, your partner might blame you for the whole affair, and harbour such resentment that it would make your life unhappy.

How your elder girl would react to her new surroundings is also problematical. Here she would be in the position of an only child, and would suffer from the handicaps of that position. Children develop much better in the company of other children. When they are spoiled or petted they are unable to face the world with any degree of confidence. Finally, unless your sister is of an unselfish disposition you would have to expect that "mine and thine" would enter largely into all your discussions concerning the child. Again, when your little girl grew older there would inevitably arise the question of taking sides, with all the attendant friction.

This seems to be one of those problems where money would soon put matters right. The happiest, and by far the best solution, would be for your better-off relations to come to your aid at this trying time. Perhaps your sister's affection for the elder girl would lead her to arrange for a gift or loan which might be used for the child's benefit. Except under very great stress it is not good for loved children to be parted from their family in this way. You are advised to reconsider this matter, and to make every effort to retain your child.

#### MY WIFE'S PARENTS ARE HOLDING HER— WHAT SHALL I DO?

*My wife is only nineteen years of age and I am twenty-one. I think the world of her. Since our baby came, however, circumstances have changed. I became unemployed just before the baby*

*was due and my wife went back to her parents' home so as to have them look after her. The trouble is that I cannot get her to return to me. I think her parents are at the bottom of it, because they were dissatisfied with the amount I was able to contribute towards the expenses of the confinement. When I ask about my wife coming back the only reply is as to how much money I am prepared to give her mother. I cannot pay until my prospects improve. What do you advise?*

There may be a not unnatural reluctance on the part of the parents to allow their daughter to return to you until they are assured you are in a position to support her and the baby. The attitude of your wife, however, is more difficult to explain. Although a girl of her age may be still under the influence of her mother to a great extent, her love for you and her desire to share your home should be sufficient in the ordinary way to decide her to return. If there has been any misunderstanding between you previously you should take immediate steps to get this put right. In any case, you would be well advised not to quarrel with your partner at this early stage of her motherhood. Another thing to bear in mind is that many women after a first confinement are subject to delusions more or less grave, but luckily, as a rule, these do not last long. They may have the idea that their husbands no longer love them, or that they have lost their affection for their husband and do not wish to live with him again. At this time, too, they are very easily influenced, especially by a person of determined will, such as your mother-in-law appears to be. It would be better to go slowly for a while, and in the meantime, to come to some definite arrangement with your wife's people for the repayment of any money due to them. As your wife recovers her strength her attitude to you may suddenly change. If everything rests upon a cash basis perhaps you could explain the circumstances to a sympathetic friend who would help you to find a quick solution. In any case you are advised not to contemplate any legal action until every other means have failed.

## CHAPTER 12

### HUSBANDS AND WIVES

#### JEALOUS HUSBANDS AND WIVES

ONE of the most frequent causes of domestic unhappiness is jealousy. It is a real tragedy when symptoms of this disease—for it is nothing less—begin to show, but unfortunately there are very few people who are without any traces in their

character. Under normal conditions, however, when things are going well and there is no great emotional strain, it is fairly easy to hold it in check. Years of peaceful routine may pass, and then suddenly a domestic crisis may arise and a loved one, possibly by some unconscious act, may cause a violent fit of jealousy which may be quite overwhelming in its strength and drive everything else out of mind. This, however, is normal, and it is not unusual here for the injured person to regain a more balanced attitude after a time. Resignation, and even pity, may take the place of revenge, but in the case of the man or woman who has shown jealous traits from childhood, it is quite different and he or she may leave a train of despair and misery behind them. Quarrelling when young with brothers and sisters, disputing and arguing in courtship and openly denouncing the partner in wedlock are signs of the characteristic. It seems almost as if the disease was born in them, for no amount of reasoning has the slightest effect, and even when they profess to see the stupidity of their actions they seem powerless to change their character.

### LOVE AND JEALOUSY ARE INCOMPATIBLE

A jealous husband will be suspicious of the slightest attention his wife may pay to any one else, and cannot bear to hear her speak of past attractions. He will endeavour to keep her exclusively for himself, and will not only try to make her concentrate upon his interests, but will expect her to ignore others, if not to treat them with contempt. In later life he will be jealous of his adolescent sons and his daughters' lovers. In his trade or profession he hates everybody who is promoted over him, and will do his best to belittle them. He does not care twopence whether he makes other people happy or not, but he is determined they shall all minister to his comforts.

The sole idea of the jealous wife is to demand all her husband's attention, and to quarrel with anybody and anything threatening her monopoly. She decries her husband's friends and relatives, and will go out of her way to offend and antagonize them. If her husband picks up a book or paper she will attack him for preferring to read. As soon as he praises a good quality in an acquaintance, she will begin to pick him or her to pieces straightway. She will not let her husband smoke in the house, although she may openly encourage a visitor to do so. She reads her husband's correspondence, and suspects his most innocent act. If he arrives home half an hour late she will be almost hysterical, and demand an explanation. In short, if allowed, this type of woman will try to live her unfortunate husband's life as well as her own.

Neither jealous husbands or wives possess any real capacity for

love. They are even at enmity with themselves, for they are constantly tortured by their doubts and fears, and feel torn to pieces. At all costs they must come first, and they will inflict every possible humiliation on their associates in order to reinforce their own position. If thwarted by their husband, who has been driven almost to desperation, they may alternately whine, try to arouse pity, or burst into explosive anger and cause a public scene. A man or woman linked with a really jealous mate is to be pitied, especially when we recall Molière's saying that "Jealous people love their illness and wish to die of it." Perhaps it is not always so bad as that, for repeated mishaps and sorrows may help to bring about a partial repentance and an effort to make amends. The amount of silent suffering which is endured by the victim of jealousy is enormous. He or she can only hope that repeated efforts to keep the peace will one day win its just reward.

Robert Louis Stevenson once said that as soon as a man and woman were husband and wife there was nothing for them to do but to be absolutely honest for the rest of their lives. What he had in mind was not so much the necessity of sticking to a rigid code of conduct, as of taking each other into confidence and doing nothing which, if discovered, might cause grief or disappointment. Most people are only too ready to agree to this on their wedding day, for they are sure that no occasion for deceit and disloyalty can ever possibly arise.

### TRAGEDIES IN MARRIED LIFE

Before the end of the first three or four years of married life, however, much may have happened to put these principles to a severe test. By this time the first great passion will have worn off, and their love for each other may depend more upon mental harmony and understanding, than upon the continuance of any physical attraction. Each too, will have found his or her place in the home. If both husband and wife have been wise enough to give and take, and to accept cheerfully certain individual obligations, all may be well; but if there has been a more or less open struggle for mastery and leadership, the position may not be at all secure, and may even be far from happy.

Quite a number of women enter married life with the firm intention of exerting a secret influence over their husband. They may have been clever enough to hide this ambition during courtship, but no sooner are they safely wed, than they start pushing their claims little by little. Getting an advantage here, or forcing a concession there, sometimes by cajolery, and at other times with tears, and before long, without actually henpecking their partner, they have gathered a considerable amount of power in their hands. Perhaps this process has been so subtle that the husband

does not realize how his lead has been stolen from him, but one day something may open his eyes, and he may put down his foot vigorously. This will be the signal for the wife to show her true colours and come more into the open. If her husband proves obstinate in spite of all her wiles, she may try to bring him to his senses by refusing him any intimate love relationship, or, at best, by so consenting that he is made to feel despicable in some way, and has no joy in her. She has only to keep up this revenge long enough to bring about her own downfall; for there will come a time when her husband will grow indifferent to her, and almost impotent as far as she is concerned. It is easy to foretell that such a marriage will have constantly recurring problems, ever growing worse, and that when the husband meets some other woman who "understands him"—as he will be almost certain to do sooner or later, for he will be ever on the watch for mental sympathy—the position can become full of danger.

#### WHEN ONE WOMAN IS NOT ENOUGH

There are men who marry with the intention of keeping their vows, but others enter into matrimony with secret reservations. Throughout their life some men have had a training and disposition which will make it far from easy for them to confine their attention to one woman. Sometimes this is suspected by their fiancées, but in this case they generally delude themselves that their love will be a sufficient hold. In rare cases, by making sacrifices all round, this faith is justified. But it more often happens that this type of husband soon begins to look around for secret amorous adventures, and growing more daring with success, and in the belief that his wife will never lose her love for him, continues to live a double life. It is true he has to be an expert liar, and a specialist in concealment and subterfuge, and he may sometimes ask himself if the game is really worth the candle. When his wife's growing suspicions are confirmed at last, it is usually good-bye to any further chance of harmony in the home. So it comes about that some husbands are driven to extra marital relations by a domineering, aggressive wife who withholds sympathy and recognizes no marital obligations, whilst other men believe they need so many and varied feminine contacts that no one woman can ever hope to satisfy them. These two types of problem (together with jealousy, which is often an off-shoot) are at the bottom of most matrimonial troubles.

#### FIGHTING THE DEMON OF HABIT

It is a grave mistake for married people to let routine rule their lives. In a well-run household there must be certain things done at certain times, but in the happiest homes this sense of order is



never too conspicuous. We feel able to take little liberties which while nothing in themselves, make all the difference to the sense of well-being.

On the other hand, some homes are run like business offices and breathe an atmosphere of precision and "old-maidishness," which is almost freezing. Everything will be found in its place and is never allowed to move an inch. That is handy, of course, but there is far more joy in hunting up a lost slipper or paper than in sitting on the best polished chair in the world, and placing the cigarette ash on the tray which, as soon as one has lighted up has been pushed a trifle nearer by an over-careful hand. Homes where the inmates have the habit of working to the clock, and regulating all their goings and comings by the days of the week may be an excellent retreat for a robot, but they are apt to paralyze a normally human husband, and make him covet a share of the affection that his wife lavishes on the brasses. Slackness and habitual untidiness in a home are always deplorable, but an over-tidy person is far worse, and can arouse a bitter sense of resentment in the other members of the household.

### AVOIDING THE RUT

"Variety is the spice of life" is an axiom that should never be forgotten by married people, for it is the only way to keep a many-sided personality. From force of habit some husbands seem to become blind after marriage, and never see the possibilities in their wives. A husband of this type after four years of wedded life, during which he had concentrated largely upon building up a small business, suddenly became aware that he was happier in office hours than at home in the company of his wife. Some of the latter's friends, remarking upon her seemingly monotonous existence, got her to join in some amateur dramatics. She had a real gift for acting and was soon given a leading part. The first time her husband saw her in the role of a tragic young wife and heard her impassioned words to her secret lover, he got the surprise of his life. That *his* wife was capable of feeling like that! What had he been doing not to see her hidden talents?

In reality, of course, he had been asleep. He had been so busy building up his business that he had allowed his home to slip into the background and become a habit, with his wife merely as a useful piece of kitchen furniture.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF MUTUAL LOVE AND CONFIDENCE

"The home should always be a nice place to go back to." This has often been said in satire, but it is true and should always be the ideal. To make a home like this, it is essential that it should never decline into a dull backcloth for pleasanter things. The

home can never be passive, it must play an active part, and both husband and wife must take their share, individually sometimes but more often together, in making it so. Married couples must love many things together, and they should not confine themselves to a society of two, but try and widen their interests by making all kinds of contacts together. Marriage should never imply the stunting and gradual killing of vital energies and gifts, but instead should aim at developing these very qualities, both inside and outside the home. During courtship and early wedded life it requires no great effort to hold the partner's love and attention. The skill is shown in the ability to *retain* this love in after years. The man or woman who believes that by limiting the partner's activities, and imposing a personal standard of conduct, he or she can make a happy home, is very seriously mistaken.

One astute husband, when he was asked the secret of his long and happy married life, said that he had wed one woman but had found a hundred in her. Similarly, in one of his novels H. G. Wells makes a husband take his wife away from the conventional life which is stifling their affections to the wilds of Alaska to rediscover their love in a primitive existence. Few married people can take such drastic steps, but every one should try not to fall into the demon of habit, and instead be always ready for any adventure. When a married couple find themselves getting less out of life than they had hoped they should try at once to face things squarely and at least make some sort of change. This does not mean the breaking of any ties or the slightest divergence from the "path of duty," but they should find side-avenues and by-lanes whose possibilities they could explore, without infringing upon any one's rights. In course of time they could take up the old route again, and perhaps marvel at the good things there they had previously missed.

#### PROBLEM OF AFTER-MARRIAGE FRIENDSHIPS

What friendships should a married man or woman retain or make? This problem disturbs many a couple who, while glad to have outside companionship, are not willing to displease a partner or give any cause for jealousy. It is stupid for married people to try to confine their interests to the home. Each of the partners should have at least one good friend of the same sex. The difficulty usually arises when the friend happens to be of the opposite sex.

There are some men and women who seem to need an extended "permission to love." Contrary to the general opinion this does not mean they are over-sexed, or trying to start an affair with anybody else, but that they require intimate mental contacts, to exchange ideas, and to express themselves without reserve.

Admittedly, there is always an element of danger in such a relationship—for the bridge between friendship and love is often a short one—but this does not imply that such friendships should always be debarred. Some natures are freshened and invigorated by a new mental stimulus, and show no less affection for their partner; indeed, the bond between them is often all the stronger.

### NEED FOR COMPLETE FRANKNESS

One stipulation, however, should always govern these relationships. *There must be no element of secrecy about them.* Husband and wife must be perfectly frank with each other. The writer, Edward Carpenter, said that married men and women should be encouraged to speak to each other about their loves. Few married people today are so honest of heart as to be able to do this. But there might be a hundred times less misery, deceit and subterfuge in married life if both partners were franker in their relationship.

"If only we were better off and could afford . . ." Many a young wife has said these words, and lived to see her wish come true, without having experienced anything like the happiness she expected. Often, if persuaded to confess what had gone wrong she might own that in the old struggling days, when she and her husband worked side by side, there was a greater joy to be got out of little successes than she ever feels nowadays. On the other hand, no one with family responsibilities who is hard up and uncertain of the next penny, can know much happiness and peace of mind, but there are innumerable bored men and women, with plenty of money who are even unhappier. They rush from one distraction to another to find temporary forgetfulness in movement, alcohol, or illicit sex. A glimpse at their faces, or the drift of their conversation, often discloses the most hopeless neurosis.

### MEANING OF MARRIED HAPPINESS

It is true that money will help to solve scores of married problems but it cannot be guaranteed to bring more than a passing satisfaction if people have lost the power of looking to one another for real and lasting happiness. Many married people would acknowledge that the greatest thrills of their lives were at those times when fortune or misfortune hung in the balance. A business just saved by the united and strenuous efforts of man and wife; a pressing bill paid off when the broker's man was waiting at the door; a child pronounced out of danger after a severe illness—it is such memories which remain, and seldom fail to bring husband and wife to a realization of what they mean to each other.

The wife who can enter fully into as many phases of her husband's life as possible, and whose day is completely occupied by her children and domestic and social duties, gets the most out

of life. A woman can experience real joy in the most adverse circumstances. She can find pleasure and satisfaction in a routine which would be insufferable to her husband. When life is easy some types of women deteriorate rapidly, and lapse into indolence and a growing discontent. Most women, for example, are at their happiest when they are called upon to make sacrifices for their family. Then they feel conscious of their worth and proud of their responsibilities. Many a man, in one-time easy circumstances, has had the surprise of his life in finding how his wife has rallied to him at his hour of need. Misfortunes may be a blessing in disguise when they disclose unsuspected qualities and bring out the best in people. A woman who feels that she counts with husband, children and friends, and that her services are indispensable to them, will keep a youthful spirit, and often a measure of good looks, despite any hardships she and her family may have to face.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### HOW CAN I CURE MY HUSBAND'S NEGLECT ?

*My husband seems to have changed a lot since the early days of our marriage. Now he seldom troubles to kiss me and never brings me flowers or any other little present. I can truly say that I almost worship him, and I rarely miss an opportunity of showing my affection. I do not mean that he is neglectful in a general way, but I miss those little courtesies and "sweet nothings" which made our courtship so wonderful. Can you tell me how to make him realize that his seeming neglect is hurting me?*

Your husband is evidently taking you for granted. That is the fault with many men after marriage. Having wooed and won you he thinks you will remain his devoted partner for life without any further effort on his part to retain your affection. A great mistake most married men and women make is to believe they think alike in all things, when the truth is that except on a few points of common interest their minds run on different lines, and some of their ideas are directly opposed. It is a good thing this is so, for otherwise life would be dull and monotonous, but it would be well if married couples modelled their attitude to each other more upon this realization.

Your husband's idea of a young wife's need of affection differs widely from yours. The question is how to bring him to see this. Perhaps if you dropped the "worshipper" attitude for a time, and appeared to cool off somewhat, the idea might strike him that something was wrong. Easy victories leave something unsatisfied

in a man. His natural instinct is to fight for his prize, and what falls easily and almost unasked for into his lap is not valued nearly so much as the reward for which he has had to struggle and fight. Play on this instinct for a time and watch his reactions. When a partner finds that married life is giving something less than was hoped, it is often a good idea to plan a different line of approach. This should be no hasty, impetuous move, but an honest endeavour to make him or her see the other from a different angle. The results are often very satisfactory.

### SHOULD I SHOW UP A DISLOYAL SISTER-IN-LAW ?

*I am terribly anxious about my sister-in-law. She was married two years ago when my brother was working at a steady job. In less than a year he lost his post. After six months he accepted a situation out East and will be away three years. He hopes to save enough money to start a small business upon his return. His wife came to live with me up north, where nobody knows anything about her. Now, since three months, she has been carrying on with a married man who is separated from his wife. I have done my best to dissuade her, but she only laughs and says she must have a little fun at times. If I told my brother, I am sure it would break his heart as he almost worships her. What do you think of the situation ?*

You are placed in an unenviable position, and will have to act with great tact or you may easily make matters worse. A serious problem arises at times when a husband is obliged to live abroad and leave a young wife behind. The position is made worse when there is no family and the woman has plenty of time on her hands. If she is of the light-headed type it is easy to guess that sooner or later temptations will arise. In a sense it is an unnatural situation for a young wife, and sympathy should be extended to her as well as criticism. Three years is a long time to be deprived of her husband's company, and if her sense of loyalty is not deep she may resent her fate and look around for consolation. It is next to impossible to reason either with an infatuated man or woman. It seems as if your sister-in-law had weighed up the situation and decided to go her own way. Have you told her companion what you think of the affair, and what the consequences might be if your brother should get word of what was going on? If you think that matters are getting really serious, without disclosing more than is necessary, you might ask your clergyman or some local man of standing, to intercede on your brother's behalf. As a last resource you could threaten to write to your brother yourself. If you feel compelled to do this, however, you could intimate in the first place that it would be well worth his while to get his wife to join him. But you are strongly advised



not to take any step while there is a chance of your sister-in-law giving up this man and looking for a less dangerous pastime. Any impetuous move now on your part might have more serious results than you would care to anticipate.

### SHOULD A MARRIED WOMAN GO ON EXCURSIONS WITH ANOTHER MAN ?

*I have been married for eight years and my husband and I have lived happily with our two children until a month ago. We have never been able to afford luxuries, but have made the best of life. Now a friend of ours has a car, and lately I have been going out for trips with him and either his wife or my husband's sister. I see no harm in it as, generally, I take the children with me. Suddenly, however, my husband has forbidden me to go on these trips, saying he does not like the idea of my riding about with other married men. It seems to me unfair to want to deprive me of almost the only pleasure I have ever had, which costs him nothing. Do you think it would help matters at all if I were to suggest to our friend with the motor car that he should occasionally take my husband for a trip instead of taking me ?*

Has it never struck you before this that your husband may have wondered why you were always invited on these trips and never himself? If he were at all inclined to jealousy he would find a reason here for showing resentment, and you must not be surprised at the attitude he has taken. The fact that your pleasure "costs him nothing" would hardly count with him at all under these particular circumstances. Human nature being what it is, a husband would not like to be reminded that his wife was often seen with another married man in his car. Again, when the average man sees that his wife obviously delights in accepting a favour from another man which he cannot provide himself, he may be hurt, and begin to reproach people, or circumstances, for his poverty. This will not make for happiness in the home. It would be unwise for you to jeopardize eight years of married happiness for the sake of a few outings, however much you appreciate the novelty. And, as your husband has strong views of his own about the rights and wrongs of these trips—perhaps he has reasons for objecting unknown to you—it would be better to follow his wishes. But, as you suggest, a compromise might be reached by making him one of the party on future occasions.

### IS IT POSSIBLE TO LIVE WITH A TOO ORDERLY WIFE ?

*I left my wife a year ago simply because I could not live up to her standard. Many people would regard her as a model wife; but I was the victim of her perfections. If I flicked cigarette ash on the carpet, or left a newspaper on a chair I was told that I*

*was littering up the place and making the house unfit to be lived in. It got to be so bad that I was more or less afraid to sit on the settee for fear of crumpling the cushion. In the end it became so intolerable that I cleared out. Now my wife wants me back and says that if we pull together we can make a success of our married life. I should be a big gainer financially by returning to her, but wonder if it would be wise. What do you think?*

You are not the first man whose life has been made miserable by a wife with a mania for clearing up and keeping things tidy. A love of neatness and order is commendable, but when carried to extremes it shows unlovable traits in the character. A wife who grumbles habitually and scolds when her arrangement of things is disturbed is, in reality, saying to her mate: "*This is what I want in my house, and you will have to fit in with my scheme, or there will be trouble. You may think you have the right to a life of your own, but I intend to show you that when at home you must always conform to my ideas without protest!*" Such a domineering attitude is likely to extend in other directions if it meets with no opposition. A curious fact to be noted is that the woman gets little pleasure from her partner's docility, but rather scorns him for his want of manliness in not standing up to her. The more he gives in, the more she will seek to repress him further. If you had taken a firm stand from the beginning the chances are that after one or two battles you would have found your wife more amenable. Should you return to her now you must not allow her to restart her old ways—otherwise you are lost. Have a clear understanding that there is to be no complaining about trivial matters, and you should even suggest she has one room which would be hers to do as she liked with.

#### SHOULD A HUSBAND GO OUT WITH HIS BACHELOR FRIENDS?

*I have been married for two years and during this time I have kept up my association with a number of my bachelor friends. On an average I see them once a week, sometimes not so frequently. My wife has no friends and goes out with nobody except me and her people. She wants me to cultivate married friends as our means do not allow us to join a club. Now she is getting really upset at my keeping up my old associations, and says that if I put my friends before her, a separation must be obtained. With the exception of these occasional outings I am at home nearly every evening and, apart from this difference between us, my wife and I get along very well together. Am I an offender, or is my wife unreasonable in this matter?*

Unless there is something very objectionable about the bachelor friends the woman who would separate from her husband because

he went out once a week is hard to understand. It is to be feared that your wife is of the narrow, possessive type, who want to possess their husbands body and soul. The fact that she has no friends of her own points to unusual traits in her character. As a rule the friendless man or woman is inclined to be neurotic and self-sufficient, and will resent any attempt at a near approach. It would be a good idea, all the same, to make the acquaintance of a few married people as your wife suggests. This would help to bring her out and might broaden her ideas. As you "get along very well together" in other things this seems to show that a basis exists between you on which to build up a completer understanding. Possibly, too, there are other factors you have not disclosed which might throw more light upon the seriousness of the situation.

### HOW CAN I RECOVER THE FIRST PASSION OF LOVE ?

*I have been married for five years and have recently come to the terrible realization that my husband does not love me. He did so once, but today it is very obvious that I no longer awake in him the tenderness that I formerly inspired. It is wonderful, however, the respect he shows for me—that is the shock, the marvellous respectful deference. It is my intuition which has spoken; there has never been a word from him that would indicate a change of feelings. But I know and the knowledge is a terrible thing. In five years the "grand" feeling has vanished and I am now among those who must be respected and deferred to. I am perplexed, miserable, and sorry for him and myself. What do you think about this crisis, for it is certainly that to me?*

Many married people have to face just such a crisis as this. The enormous pity is that in the majority of cases neither husband nor wife understands the situation, and each is inclined to blame the other. From your words it is easy to gather that both you and your partner are of a sensitive type. If one of you had been more of a realist, and had complained openly as soon as things seemed to be going wrong, matters might not have reached the present crisis. What you have been doing is to build up a wall between you, and each antagonistic thought you kept to yourselves, and were afraid to express, was just another brick added to it. Now the barricade which separates you is so thick that you have almost lost sight of your original love. In the beginning of your marriage physical passion may have played a large part, but in course of time the love which was originally sexual should have mellowed into companionship. It would be better to know if there are any physical or mental obstacles which tend to divide you. You do not state if there are children, and this is an important point. Or if either you or your husband has any sexual fear or inhibition.

There are a hundred subtle factors, both physical and mental which might help to explain his indifference, and without more information it is difficult to do more than to generalize.

There is certainly nothing more demoralizing to an affectionate woman than to be treated by her husband with too marked deference, for this attitude can stun far more than an actual blow. In reality this is no mark of respect, but just the reverse! What it really wants to say is "You do not come up to my ideal, therefore, I want no further intimate contact with you!" There is not nearly so much love as selfishness and self-pity behind this polite mask. Just as a painful exploratory operation is sometimes needed to remedy a physical ill, you should not shirk the search to discover the causes of your husband's discontent! Have the courage to face the situation! Ask him frankly if, and where, you have failed him: do not let him hide behind his usual reserves but drive him into the open. Give him no peace until you have forced a confession from him. When your partner sees you have grasped the situation, and that your chances of attaining mutual happiness rest in his intelligent co-operation, he may come out quickly from behind his defences. As a last suggestion it might pay you to plan a radical change of living for a time.

### TORN BETWEEN HUSBAND AND FATHER—WHAT SHOULD I DO?

*My husband and I, with our little baby, were perfectly happy and very devoted to each other until my father came to live with us about two years ago. Now my home seems to be falling about me. Father thinks that I ought to be constantly waiting upon him while my husband is more or less expected to wait upon himself. Our plan to visit my husband's home for the holidays is upset because my father thinks we ought to go to the seaside and look after him. I am torn between my husband and my father, and sometimes the position of affairs is such as to give me a "nerves" period. What do you suggest as the best way to meet this awkward situation?*

Your first duty is to your husband, and although your father has some claim upon your sympathy he should not be allowed to become a vampire in the house and break up your domestic life. In nine cases out of ten it is a great mistake for married people to take a parent into the family. Numberless homes have come to grief in this way. No woman can live between two men, and you are finding it impossible to satisfy both your father and your husband. It is quite natural for your partner to resent your services being filched from him by an outsider, for when he married you he certainly did not bargain for this. Without any further delay you should make arrangements for your father to live with

a friend or go into a home of some sort—even at the cost of any sacrifice. It may hurt you to separate from him, especially if the bond between you has been strong, but you must put up with that. A far greater danger would be to quarrel with your husband, and see the subsequent breaking up of your home. One other point you have overlooked is of the greatest importance. In a contentious, nervous atmosphere your child is being slowly poisoned, and may suffer if you do not realize that it is your plain duty to provide the harmonious surroundings so necessary for him in which to develop and thrive.

### HOW SHALL I TREAT A VAMPING SISTER-IN-LAW ?

*My wife and I have been happily married for five years, but now my happiness in the home has been seriously disturbed. My wife's younger sister has returned from a post abroad and seems to have settled with us for a long stay. She is a beautiful girl but something of a "vamp"; but there could never be any one in my life but my own partner. At odd moments when my wife is out of the room she will kiss me and call me "a dear old brother-in-law" and say how she envies her sister. On several occasions when my wife has been shopping she has deliberately set herself at me, and has gone so far as to suggest she could love me "terribly." I have done nothing to be ashamed of, but I certainly do not like the idea of temptation being continually before me. My wife, of course, knows nothing of this, and I cannot find a solution. What do you advise, please ?*

There are all the elements here of an embarrassing and dangerous situation. Wives are much sharper at sensing infidelity than most husbands think. They have often a pretty good idea of the way things are going before they begin to voice a protest—and then it may indeed be a thunderbolt ! If you were to make inquiries about the childhood history of your sister-in-law, you would probably discover that she was jealous of your wife. This is very often the case with the younger of two sisters. The spirit of competition is entered into at a very early age, and the younger girl resents the elder's advantage in many things. The words "I envy my sister" show that your visitor has not changed her character greatly. It is unlikely that she would deliberately harm your wife, but her behaviour now shows her at the very least to be thoughtless and disloyal.

Ovid's advice about love still holds good "*Look to the end*" he said, and with truth. If, in a weak moment, when you are off your guard, your sister-in-law succeeds in compromising you, it will mean either playing the hypocrite or declaring the fact to your wife. You would be very unwise to place yourself in this young lady's power. When you say "I cannot find a solution," you



mean you are not particularly anxious to offend your sister-in-law. No man wants to be unchivalrous, but, in these circumstances, where so much is involved, it would be better for you to tell this young lady in unmistakable language that she must withhold her attentions. When she sees you mean what you say she will desist if she is normal. If she persists in pestering you there will be nothing to do but to take your wife into your confidence. But the chances are a hundred to one it would never come to that. Make an end of this impossible situation without further delay.

## CHAPTER 13

### SOCIAL DUTIES OF MARRIAGE

#### HOW TO ARRANGE A WEDDING

**A**T some time or other most married women are asked by a young friend, who is just about to be married, to give some hints about the procedure at church, and to explain what part the parents, bridesmaids and best man are expected to play. It is useful to know these things in advance, for it saves both time and worry. To begin with, if the bride-to-be wants a stylish wedding she will need four to six bridesmaids, and should invite at least two of this number from her fiancé's family. In a quieter wedding, two bridesmaids will be needed or, in some cases, only one. The bridesmaids' dresses—which must be bought at their own expense—should be decided; the wishes of the bride are final. If the wedding is a quiet one, the bride usually wears an afternoon frock instead of the usual white, and carries no bouquet although a few flowers are permissible. In this case, the bridesmaids should also wear afternoon frocks. If a bride is married in her travelling costume, the flowers should be pinned to her coat. The chief bridesmaid's duty is to take charge of the bride's bouquet and gloves just before the bridegroom puts on the ring (When the marriage is at a registry office, no bridesmaids or best man are necessary, but there must always be two witnesses to the signature.)

The best man is an important actor in any marriage. He is responsible for most of the arrangements, and should see that the ceremony goes off without a hitch. His duties include paying the clergyman his fees and tipping the verger and other attendants. During the ceremony, he should stand at the bridegroom's right and hand him the ring at the appropriate moment. After the formalities in the vestry, he must hasten to see that the bridal ca-



*"When the children marry" is a turning point in the life of every couple. Behind them lie the busy years of bringing up the family and before them seems emptiness. Yet the peace of middle age can be even more satisfactory than the exciting responsibilities of earlier married life.*

is ready. If he fancies himself at all as a wit and a speechmaker, he will have his opportunity during the reception in replying to the toast of the bridesmaids. Finally, he is responsible for the send-off; and when the journey is made by train he must see to the luggage and book the seats. For a formal wedding the bridegroom should wear a black morning coat, grey waistcoat and pin-striped trousers, and should be complete with top-hat and white buttonhole. For a quiet wedding, however, he can wear a dark lounge suit. At one time the best man was always a bachelor, but nowadays this is not always the case, although it is certainly more common. One final point: the bridegroom should always make sure that his best man is not out of pocket, and it is becoming increasingly common to give him a present.

### DUTIES OF THE BRIDE'S FATHER

The bride's father has his definite duties in the ceremony, but his chief responsibility is to pay the bills! He is expected to pay for the bride's trousseau, the wedding reception, and the cars to the church. According to his financial circumstances, too, he should give a cheque or its equivalent to his daughter. When the bridal party arrive at the church he should escort the bride up the aisle, she holding his right arm. He has also to give her away with the consenting response "I do." In the vestry he witnesses the signatures of the newly-married couple, and in the procession down the aisle offers his arm to the bridegroom's mother or nearest relative. His last duty is to propose the toast of the bride and bridegroom during the reception.

The bride's mother is primarily responsible for the success of the wedding festivities. It is she who sends out the invitations some three weeks in advance in the usual formula "Mr. and Mrs. Smith request the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. X's company at the marriage of their daughter Joan to Mr. William Brown, at St. Mary's Church, Fanchester on July 30th at 2.15 o'clock, and afterwards at 12, Bruce Street." She acts as hostess at the reception, produces the wedding cake, looks after the comfort of the guests, and does all the hundred and one little things that the bride is far too excited and busy to do.

### VISITING AND LEAVING CARDS

When a married couple take a house in a new district they can usually make friends fairly quickly, particularly if they are sociably inclined. A few weeks after they settle down, "callers" will begin to arrive. Although the trend of modern life is towards dispensing more and more with formalities, there are certain rules of etiquette which help to make social contacts easier, and these should be known by every young couple setting up house for the first time.

When a neighbouring lady calls on a new-comer for the first time, it is usually between three and four in the afternoon. She should leave three visiting cards on the hall table, two of her husband's—of a smaller size—and one of her own. These cards should be left whether she finds the lady at home or not. A first visit should not last longer than twenty minutes, and tea will not be expected. The visitor's call should be returned within a week or ten days, the new-comer leaving three cards in her turn. In the case of the householder being a widow, or a maiden lady, two cards only are left—one each of husband's and wife's. The husband alone should call on a newly arrived bachelor, and no further formalities are necessary.

Visiting cards should always be enclosed with gifts of flowers sent to invalids or friends, and in making an inquiry about the progress of a sick person a card should be left. When travelling it is always well to restock your card-case. New friends may be made who will want to know your home address, and cards will always come in useful in proving your identity if ever it is needed.

### DINNER-TABLE DIFFICULTIES

A good dinner has often been declined only because the guest is afraid of making a fool of himself by his ignorance of correct table manners. It is not so much that he is not at home in company, but that he is afraid that some dish will be served, with which he is not familiar, and he will not know whether he should eat it with his fingers, his fork or his spoon. But a few useful and easily remembered hints should do away with the need for any future embarrassment. "When can I use my fingers?" a diner-out might well ask for example. The slice of bread or roll by the plate should be broken with the fingers and buttered *piece by piece*. Asparagus too is generally eaten with the fingers, although there are several ingenious tools now on the market. Bananas should be peeled and munched, and celery should also be held in the hand.

Fruit often gives the most trouble. Apples, peaches and pears should be speared with a fork and then peeled with a knife. Afterwards they should be cut up into little pieces. It is advisable to cut unpeeled oranges into quarters. The skin can then be easily removed. One cannot be finicky with the pips from grapes and gooseberries, and the stones from cherries and other fruit. They should be removed from the mouth—as unostentatiously as possible—with the fingers or spoon. If the soup is particularly good no one will object to the plate being tilted, but, for some unexplained reason, it must be away from and not towards the diner. Care should be taken that the correct spoon is used. Fish knives and forks should always be supplied and used for a fish

course. Sometimes in restaurants and private houses fish and savouries are brought to the table in little separate dishes. "Shall I eat from the dish or turn it out?" the puzzled guest may easily ask himself. Usually it is a matter of preference. If, when turned out, the food would present a messy appearance it is better to eat it direct from the dish. A useful tip—when doubtful whether to use fork or spoon, select the fork. Puddings, jellies and soft dishes can be easily handled in this way with a little practice, but it is always quite safe to use both spoon and fork.

### ENTERTAINING A FEW FRIENDS

Returning hospitality is another problem that worries many newly married young people, especially if they want to entertain a number at once, and have not too much money to spend. One excellent way of entertaining a number of people inexpensively is a sherry or cocktail party. These are becoming more and more popular, and do not involve more than a little preparation. Its success will depend on its informality, the quality and manner of serving of the drinks and snacks, and the personality of the host or hostess. The more the merrier—within reason—is the best plan for a sherry party. Most guests would rather be somewhat crowded than sense a cold atmosphere. Cocktails can either be bought ready mixed, or else gin and vermouth, or sherry can be served. In any case the ice should not be forgotten for the cocktails, for that will make all the difference to their flavour. To avoid much washing up, and save time, a few dozen glasses should be borrowed from a caterer or nearby hotel. Some one should be requisitioned to keep these constantly filled, and somebody else should take away the empties. To make sure that supplies do not run out, an average of three glasses should be reckoned for each guest, and a spare bottle should always be kept in the cupboard in case of emergencies. Do not forget, too, to have a bottle of fruit juice for any teetotallers.

### RUNNING THE PARTY

A couple of brands of cigarettes, preferably one of Virginian and one Turkish, should be provided, and plenty of ash-trays placed around, if only to save the furniture. One table should support several plates of dainty little fruit and savoury sandwiches, small biscuits and cubes of cheese. Guests should serve themselves, but a helper should stand by to attend to any stragglers, and take care that all requirements are met. The host and hostess should keep the ball rolling from the start, and see that nobody is left out. Their task should not be difficult, for sherry parties usually go with a swing. The invitations should be for between six and eight o'clock, and people will be dropping in all the time. The



essence of success in a party is to make your guests feel welcome, and if you do this you should have no fears.

Children are often the means of bringing grown-ups together. At school they make numerous friends, and it is seldom long before they wish to introduce a favourite playmate to the home and family. When a small child expresses a wish to invite a school-friend to tea, or to a children's party, the mother should write a note to the little guest's mother if she will not be seeing her personally. This will absolve the hostess from a measure of responsibility, for in these days of congested traffic it could easily happen that the child was hurt in a traffic accident. Small children, if not called for, should be accompanied afterwards to their homes by a responsible person. This job should never be left to other children, especially after dark.

### LETTER-WRITING AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

Whether a bad correspondent likes it or not, there are occasions when a letter *must* be written. Nothing is more vexing to the sender of a gift or invitation than to wait in vain for an acknowledgment. This gives evidence of a shocking memory, of discourtesy or of intentional rudeness on the part of the receiver. In composing a letter it is better if possible not to refer to a book of rules, as these are generally far too flowery, or so precisely phrased that they arouse a suspicion of insincerity in their reader. The best plan is to state in as few words as possible what one wants to convey and leave it at that. The "*so* pleased" and "*do* hope" touch should never be overworked. An original and genuine letter is always many times better than the best copy-book example. Letters of invitation to parties, dinners, etc., should be sent out a reasonable time in advance, but if you are pressed for time, you may employ the telephone and no one will think the worse of you for it. Answers to invitations should not be delayed, otherwise a host may be puzzled with catering estimates. Sometimes, too, you may have to give a reference or to recommend a person of slight acquaintance. Without being as careful and explicit as the average lawyer, it is always best to weigh one's words before putting them on paper. "You wouldn't mind doing me this small favour, would you?" may be asked with an ingratiating smile. But it would be foolish to grant any request without first giving the matter consideration. An intimate and somewhat lengthy knowledge of a person's circumstances is necessary before one can vouch for him whole-heartedly. When a letter of this sort has to be written it is better to safeguard one's self with some such opening phrase as "During the comparatively short time I have known X——" or "As far as my short acquaintance with Y—— extends . . ." New social contacts may bring benefits in

many ways, and one is always happy to be of service, but at the same time abuses do sometimes creep in under the most friendly guises.

Short letters of condolence to sick and bereaved friends, and notes of congratulation upon births, engagements and marriages, or some other stroke of good fortune, should not be forgotten. It is these little expressions of goodwill which help to make social life pleasant. They take little time to write, and may bring happiness in various ways to their recipients. Letters to employers should be polite without being obsequious, and should keep strictly to the point. When a letter is sent dealing with a business arrangement of any importance a copy should always be kept; it may save many pounds if it is needed as evidence at any time. Very important communications should be registered at the time.

### THE CORRECT WAY TO INTRODUCE PEOPLE

"Mrs. X has asked me to introduce H to her, what do I say?" "I have to introduce my girl to old Miss B—whom I don't wish to offend in any way; how do I do it?" Such little problems of etiquette as these often puzzle people who, in the ordinary way, scarcely give a thought to the manner in which an introduction should be made. The rules are not at all difficult, and can be easily remembered. In the first instance, as a gentleman is always presented to a lady, the correct formula is "Mrs. A, may I introduce Mr. H?" In the second example, it would be right to say "Miss B, may I introduce my fiancée to you?" for a young lady—unless she is a person of high rank—is presented to the elder lady. A single woman is introduced to a married woman and, as a rule, a bachelor to a married man. Names should be pronounced distinctly and not mumbled. When introduced to a lady, a gentleman should not make a move to shake hands unless the lady first extends her hand. Neither should the man be offended if the lady remains seated, as she has a perfect right to do so. But a man should always rise when introduced to ladies or to other men. When presented it is sufficient to say "How d'you do?" A lady may simply smile by way of acknowledgment. A gentleman may be accompanying a friend who greets an acquaintance unknown to him. In this case he should raise his hat and walk on if his friend enters into conversation. In the event of a gentleman being introduced to a lady and meeting her subsequently in the street, he should wait for her to give a sign of recognition to show that she remembers him. It is never his privilege to be the first to salute.

These rules of etiquette may seem of trifling importance, but their proper observance stamps the individual as a person of some education and breeding.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### HOW SHOULD AN ESCORT CONDUCT HIMSELF ?

*I have recently made the acquaintance of a very refined young lady who, I feel, is far superior to myself in many ways. I must confess I am more than a little in love with her, and I should be awfully sorry to do anything which would lower me in her estimation. I believe, if I asked her, she would consent to walk out with me; but before taking this step I should like to know some of those little courtesies which every man is supposed to know. Not that I am entirely ignorant, but I am aware some of these things have to be learned, and that mistakes are easily made.*

There are a few rules which should be observed when walking with a lady in a public thoroughfare. Don't allow your companion to walk on the outside of the path next to the gutter : always take that position yourself. If you want to smoke ask her permission first, but, better still, wait until she suggests it to you. When raising your hat in a salute, remove your pipe or cigarette from your mouth, and lift your hat off your head. If you happen to meet a funeral, also raise your hat. If you take a bus or a taxi, allow the lady to get in first, but you must be ready to help her step down at the end of the journey. When meeting her by chance in the street, don't keep her standing, but accompany her in the direction she wishes to go.

Should this young lady invite you to meet her people, don't remain seated while a lady or elderly person is standing. If you have been asked to tea do not stay on until supper-time unless you have been specifically asked. Take off your hat in a private lift if ladies are present, but retain it if you wish in a shop or office lift. Dress neatly and never wear anything gaudy or likely to attract attention. Don't mix the colours of coat and trousers from different suits. A last tip. Don't do all the talking yourself. By proving yourself a good listener, and by asking intelligent questions, you should easily keep your place in her esteem.

### IS THERE A SPECIAL ETIQUETTE FOR DANCE HALLS ?

*My fiancée is very fond of dancing and has persuaded me to take a few lessons. Next week we go to our first dance together. This will be a new experience for me, and I don't want to make myself conspicuous in any way. Can you please give me a few hints that will prove useful to a beginner ?*

After you have left your hat and coat in the cloakroom wait for your fiancée in the hall, and enter the ballroom together. Probably you will dance with her for the greater part of the evening, except

in the "Paul Jones," which will give you a change of partners. If your fiancée has gentlemen friends present who wish to dance with her it will be courteous of them first to ask your consent. While she is dancing you may summon up courage to advance to a lady—no introduction is needed—and demand "May I have the pleasure?" After dancing together you should thank her. Don't leave your girl alone while you look round for another partner; that will make her a "wallflower," and no girl likes this! Arrange to have the dance immediately before the refreshment interval with her, and then take her to the buffet. On this first occasion don't attempt steps which are beyond you, but watch the rest of the company and try to pick up a few hints.

### WHERE SHOULD A LADY WAIT FOR HER FRIEND ?

*My girl, who has studied etiquette, complains that I am often making mistakes. The other day I had written asking her to meet me in front of the theatre. When I arrived, seeing she was not there, I thought she might have mistaken the name and I went on to another theatre at the farther end of the street. Finally I found her in the vestibule of the first theatre where she had been waiting some long time. She said that a lady should not wait for a gentleman in the street. Is this correct ?*

This is quite correct. An appointment with a lady at a theatre or restaurant would mean that, if you arrived late, you would be expected to look for her inside the entrance hall. Ladies who stand waiting in the street are apt to be molested by undesirable characters, and they should never be subjected to this risk. It might also be useful for you to know that when you are paying a bill, or settling for the taxi, the lady moves away until the business is completed.

### HOW MUCH DO I TIP ?

*I have just come into a little legacy and think of taking a long holiday. I have never travelled before and should like to know what tips I must give. It is likely I shall be asked out to dinner occasionally. Do I tip the servant ? Please help me to understand this problem.*

\*The problem of tipping is more complicated in this country than on the Continent. When receiving the bill in a continental hotel you will always find ten per cent of the total amount has been added for tips. You are thus spared the worry of apportioning these among the staff. Although this custom is not followed at home, the amount of the tip to be given should be calculated on this basis. When you are going to leave your hotel, you should ask for the bill overnight. This will give you a chance to check

it, and of working out what you must give to the staff. Should your bill come to ten pounds you could distribute a pound between the head-waiter, chambermaid and hall porter. The first would expect the biggest tip.

When you dine at a friend's house you should not attempt to tip a servant. You are an honoured guest, and do not need to dispense any favours. But if you stay a week or so, you should leave a tip for the housemaid on the dressing-room table.

### WHAT SHALL I WEAR AT A FORMAL DINNER ?

*Our managing director has invited several of us to an evening banquet to celebrate the coming-of-age of his son. I don't possess a dress suit, but am told I can hire one for the occasion. This will be rather a smart affair, and I should like to know what I should wear.*

On ceremonial occasions such as these you should wear full evening dress; that is a tail coat, white waistcoat and white bow tie. It is only for less formal functions that a dinner-jacket suit is worn with black waistcoat and black tie. If you do not wish to put on a top-hat you can, when wearing an overcoat, wear a soft black felt, but to avoid any mistake perhaps it would be better to hire the complete outfit. This should not cost you more than a reasonable sum for the evening.

### WHAT BRIDESMAIDS' PRESENTS SHALL I GIVE ?

*My wedding is next month and I learn I am expected to give each of the bridesmaids a present. As there will be four of them, and I am by no means well off, this rather worries me. I want to do the right thing, but really can't afford expensive presents for four. What do you think about it ?*

The bridesmaids will certainly expect some little gift, but you need not give expensive presents. Small but tasteful articles of jewellery can be bought at very moderate prices, and this kind of gift is nearly always acceptable. The first time you pass a big store you should ask to be shown a selection, naming the amount you are prepared to spend. The assistant might also be helpful in making other suggestions. You should make sure that the bridesmaids receive your gifts in good time for the wedding.

### WHAT SORT OF WINE MUST I PROVIDE ?

*I have just won a competition prize, and my wife is eager to give a dinner to celebrate. I know that wine should accompany this meal, but beyond having tasted champagne once or twice I am quite at sea on this subject. Will you tell me what sort I should buy, and give me a hint or two ?*

You should get a supply of a good claret and a white wine. The



average price would be about four shillings a bottle. Any reputable wine merchant would recommend you a good vintage. A nice Sauterne or Barsac would probably meet the taste of the ladies who, as a rule, prefer a sweet wine. A good class Graves would be preferred by those who like a dry wine. Don't open the bottles until just before serving. Put the white wine in a pail with some ice, so that when poured it is well chilled. But the claret should be of the same temperature as the room, and it would be better to let it stand on the sideboard for some hours before the meal. Should there be any wine left, see that the bottle is well corked otherwise the contents will soon become sour. With the dessert you should have a port on the table, but this should not be a cheap brand. There is port *and* port, and your friends would appreciate a little extravagance on your part here. You should place your wine glasses on the right-hand side of each guest.

### WHAT GIFTS MUST I GIVE ON ARRIVING ON A VISIT TO A FRIEND'S HOUSE ?

*I am going to spend a fortnight's holiday with an old school friend of mine and her husband. This is the first time I have stayed away from home for ten years and I am afraid I don't know much about the etiquette of visiting. I know my friend keeps a maid and has a little son of four. Ought I to take them any presents, or give them gifts when I come away ? Please advise me.*

If you have any little article of your own making, or know of some special local product your friend is fond of, you could take this little gift with you. A toy or game for the little boy would also be sure to give pleasure. You will not be expected to give the husband a present. Or you could buy the lady some little memento during your stay when you were out shopping together—a nice bottle of perfume or a good box of sweetmeats would be certainly welcomed. When you leave you should give five shillings to the maid.

### WHAT DUTIES MUST I TEACH A MAID ?

*I am having a little maid to help me. She has never been out to work before, and, I believe, comes from a home where she has had little chance of being taught how to do things properly. I should like her to be useful as soon as possible, and would ask you kindly to tell me what preliminary training I should give.*

First teach her how to answer the door and announce callers, which people to invite inside, and which to keep on the step. Show her how to answer touts and pedlars and beggars without appearing rude, or making it necessary to call you. Next, instruct her in the art of moving about the house quietly, and handling things with a minimum of noise. Let her see that everything has

its place, and that it is helpful and a saving of time to keep the house tidy. She must also learn how to help at tea-time, and with an occasional late meal. A little practice with serving guests, and learning the uses of a tray, will be necessary. Stop her if she says "your wife" or "your husband" when referring to either of you, and make her say "Mr. ——" or "Madam" instead. Insist upon neatness of attire, and never pass over any slatternly habits. If you are on the telephone she must be taught how to send and receive a message, and how to make a note of calls when you are absent. A promising young girl will take an interest in being shown how to prepare a few simple dishes. Your maid should learn how to supervise anything you may have left on the stove or in the oven, and in a short time should be able to prepare and cook the vegetables, egg dishes and milk puddings. If you have small children she could soon be of invaluable help in putting on buttons and undertaking small repairs. All through the training you should try to make her see that in serving you she is learning things which will be indispensable to her when she has a home of her own to look after. Endeavour to teach her something fresh each week. Keeping up interest in this way is the surest path to making a success of her job.

#### WHAT ETIQUETTE MUST BE OBSERVED ON A CRUISE ?

*I am going for my first holiday cruise this summer and should like some hints as to the etiquette to be followed when afloat. I have had no experience of sea-going and wonder if maritime manners and customs differ greatly from those ashore.*

You will be sharing a cabin with other passengers, and in a limited space will have to find storage for your things. Don't take more bags with you than absolutely necessary, or try to encroach upon somebody else's room. Absolute tidiness will be essential, and everything must be stowed securely, and breakable articles placed in a safe position in case of rough weather. Study the comfort and convenience of others in your cabin, and do nothing which might annoy them. When on deck arrange with the deck steward for a seat, and refrain from dropping into the first one you see empty on the chance of its being free. Don't throw litter about or the ends of cigarettes. The deck has to be kept polished, and this does not help. Don't change your seat in the dining saloon without consulting the chief steward. For dress, wear either a lounge or sports suit, but put on a dinner-jacket for special functions. You can make sure of your bath, as a rule, by fixing upon a certain hour and sticking to it. Although sea travel lends itself to making acquaintances easier than on shore, one stands the risk of being snubbed by butting in or presuming that one's society is welcome. Etiquette at sea is similar to that of a good hotel.

Some of these cruises are the happy hunting-grounds of card-sharpers, crooks and "gold-diggers" of all kinds. Care should be taken not to get caught in their snares. Regarding the question of tips, a pound should cover all liabilities for a fortnight's cruise.

## SECTION V

# MIDDLE AGE

## CHAPTER 14.—TAKING STOCK OF LIFE

### SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES OF MIDDLE AGE

**M**IDDLE age for the average person begins in the period from forty to forty-five and lasts for about twenty years. The state of bodily and mental health, the occupation, environment and general outlook are all important factors in helping man or woman to keep young, or to set lines of care upon the features, and to show that life is already on the downward path. At forty-five, women should get as much out of existence as ever, while men at this age are still boys at heart and ready to take part in all but the most strenuous sports and pastimes. Yet there are decrepit individuals of both sexes who, for various reasons, look and feel old before the forties are reached, and bring into the fifth decade of life but little zest and ambition to "carry on."

If they want life to go on being full and interesting, both men and women will, if they are wise, when nearing fifty, call a halt and take stock of their position. The woman will know that she is due to go through a change which may impose certain handicaps upon her normal life for a while, whilst the man in most cases will become conscious of waning powers in some directions, and know that the time has come for him to harbour his strength and not draw too much or too often upon his reserves. So much, however, will depend upon the previous manner of life, and the mental picture each has made of future circumstances, that hardly any two people approach these years with the same ideas and conceptions.

### IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL ATTITUDE

It is the mental attitude adopted towards these years of shifting values that counts so much. If they face the oncoming changes with courage and optimism, believing the years to come will contain as many good things as ever, and that if anything is wholly or partially lost, something of equal worth will take its place, they are not likely to succumb to moods of depression and weakness which come upon the middle-aged at the time when life seems a

burden and a worry. The healthy man should find the years from forty to fifty the most fruitful of his life. He has experience behind him and discretion to guide him, and in many ways should have an advantage over younger competitors in his field of work. If he breaks down, it is not because his job is too much for him, but for the reason that, in nine cases out of ten he has abused some function or been ignorant of its proper use. Wrong diet; wrong habits; too much of this; too little of that; an unhappy love-life; greed; an overbearing vanity and a desire to keep up; ingrained pessimism; these are the things which play havoc with a man's health, and not the hours he puts in at his trade or profession. The doctor says "overwork," but few doctors can afford to tell the whole truth on every occasion. It is perhaps difficult for some people to believe that a middle-aged man who sits at meals day after day opposite a disagreeable wife who no longer finds any joy in their life together, and to whom home means only a place of boredom, is far more likely to fall victim to some complaint than the much poorer-fed individual, working long hours under less favourable conditions. The poor man may have far less food, but when he is guarded by the love and care of a sympathetic wife he can stand up to almost unbelievable hardships.

In the "forties" dissension and disharmony in the home become serious, for neither husband nor wife now possess that natural buoyancy and reserve of strength which help younger people to start all over once again. A happy home is the hall-mark of successful middle age.

### CHANGE OF LIFE IN WOMEN

At some time between her forty-fifth and fiftieth birthday the average woman will pass through what is known as the change of life, climacteric or menopause. Her monthly periods will cease—gradually, or, in cases, abruptly. Except in somewhat rare instances she will no longer be capable of bearing children. The organs of internal secretion undergo various changes and the balance of the whole system must be readjusted. This period may be completed in a few months or may extend over two or three years. Too many women suffer unnecessary fears when they approach this time. A sensible woman has nothing to fear. Out of one thousand cases investigated and reported in the *Lancet*, more than nine hundred women were able to carry on throughout the entire period of the menopause without a single interruption in their work, and of this number one woman in six had no exceptional symptoms whatever. There is no need for the terrible depressions and anxieties which are supposed to attend the change of life. They are true only in those cases where the woman has already shown a tendency to worry and despondency. This type,

frankly, would suffer badly whatever the circumstances, or under almost any condition of strain.

As a matter of fact most women feel better in every way when the system has once re-established itself. If she has been thin her figure may now improve; her mental powers may also increase and, released from her monthly disability and the fears of pregnancy, she has forces at her disposal which can be used to enrich her life in other directions. The husband can, if he will, help his wife tremendously at this time. Sympathy, patience, and a warmth of comforting affection will do far more to effect a cure than any professional advice.

### HUSBAND'S PROBLEMS AT THIS TIME

Above all, a wise husband will not make too many demands on his wife. If she has up to now been of an affectionate, or even passionate disposition, he should not show impatience or disappointment should she express a growing aversion to all sexual intercourse. It is by no means certain this will be so, for there are women whose physical needs are greater at this time. There is one golden rule to be followed: in every case the wife must be allowed to take the lead.

In one way a husband can help tremendously. If his wife has at this time the full burden of running the household on her shoulders, that burden should be lightened, especially if it entails heavy housework. If he can afford it, he might suggest extra help; if not, he can insist that other members of the household do their share, and he himself can lend a hand.

One note of warning. The husband should on no account allow his wife to take thyroid extract or drugs of any sort in the belief that they will "do good." It needs a skilful physician to diagnose the requirements of any one person, and to prescribe an exact dose. What might be harmless to one, or even beneficial, could be poisonous for another. The best home doctoring at this time is a spare diet, with abundant fruit and vegetables and little meat; sound sleep, absence of worry, and the cheerful surroundings of a pleasant well-run home.

### DO MEN EXPERIENCE A CHANGE OF LIFE ?

This question is often asked. If it is meant that men go through a change as well defined as that experienced by women, the answer is no. There are physicians who have expressed the opinion that at some time between fifty and sixty the majority of men are conscious of a more or less sudden loss of potency. This may be so in the case of a few men, but provided health has been maintained, and there has been no exceptional emotional strain, general experience does not confirm this. Thirty years ago



much harm was done by the wide circulation of ill-informed literature which purported to tell what Nature intended to do on a man's forty-fifth birthday. The noose was ready for him, and he was only required to celebrate the occasion by putting his head in and being cut off for ever from most things which made life worth while. Modern psychology has made this sort of "advice" as stale as last year's bun. Just as the expectation of life has advanced by a decade within living memory, so should a man who knows how to live, find himself in full possession of all his powers when he is very advanced in years. There are numbers of cases of men who have *started* big enterprises at fifty, and have made them very successful. The science of right living will do much to help a man prolong his active working life.

A man of fifty requires less nourishment, and a smaller variety of foods and drinks. In everything he must use self-control. The procreative power may remain to a very advanced age in a man who has *neither neglected nor abused it*. But should he refuse to restrain impulses which may have their rise only in the imagination, he can outrage nature, and be punished by prostatic troubles, and a loss of potency.

To sum up : any great and unlooked-for change which a middle-aged man experiences is brought about largely by himself. By carefully avoiding causes of fatigue and depletion he should not at any particular time be conscious of a marked diminishing of his vital forces.

### LATE PARENTHOOD AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

There are cases on record of women who have borne children some years after the change of life, but this is, of course, unusual. Though these children have been no less healthy than their brothers and sisters, pregnancies in the "fifties" may upset the family when there are already adolescent children living at home. The situation should be faced squarely some time before the baby's arrival. Some adolescents show great resentment, and find the situation embarrassing. Others welcome the baby, and are proud to take a share of the responsibility of bringing it up.

There is nothing very unusual in a man over sixty marrying a much younger woman and becoming the father of several vigorous children. If his nature is at all adaptable he will himself be made younger by his young family. But in such cases it is only common sense on the man's part to make sure that his growing family should have provision made for them in the event of his death. There is no special risk attached to the confinement of a middle-aged woman, provided she is in normal health, and has had pre-natal care. She should diet carefully, however, to avoid putting on weight, and whilst not neglecting outdoor exercise, she cannot risk

fatigue. Some pregnant middle-aged women never menstruate again after the child is born, and thus pass through the change of life with very little discomfort.

### SHORT CUTS TO OLD AGE

When the turmoil and fighting of early days is over, every man and woman hopes for a peaceful and enjoyable middle age. Some are lucky, and have enough money to retire when they are young enough to enjoy life. But there is danger in this freedom—in the very escape from the daily routine which did at any rate tend to a regular and moderate way of living. With many middle-aged people the gradual decline of procreative power marks a rise in the desire to find compensation through the good things of the table. At the time of life, when moderation and even abstinence in diet is needed, they eat twice as much as formerly, and perhaps twice as often. As a result they put on flesh and become less inclined than ever to indulge in healthy exercise. Apathy, laziness, and general uneasiness follow this abuse of privileged circumstance. Both man and woman may begin to complain of increased blood pressure through the hardening of the arteries, palpitations after the least exercise, headaches and frequent spells of biliousness. Drugs may bring momentary relief, but in the long run only further debilitate the system. If almost any of these people were asked what purpose their food was intended to serve they would reply to the effect that it gives the body strength and heat. They would be wrong. The chief function of food in the *grown* body is to *restore its waste*. And it is surprising what small quantities of the right sort of food suffice for middle-aged people who are expending but little energy. When too much is eaten the waste products cannot be eliminated, and are laid down in the connective tissues of the body. Asthma, rheumatism, arthritis and a dozen other illnesses may owe their origin to a faulty diet continued over a long period.

The problems of what to eat and when to eat are perhaps of equal importance. Middle-aged food faddists are seldom contented, happy and well, and may easily become bores to their friends. The *golden rule is to eat a little at a time of what is liked and found to agree with one*. "Too much food and too little exercise should be on the gravestones of a host of the middle-aged.

### BUSINESS WORRIES AND THEIR EFFECT ON HEALTH

The middle-aged man who has had a fair measure of success in his trade or profession, and is counting upon being able to retire on his investments, or savings, or upon a pension he has paid for, is spared many of the problems of the man who, reaching retirement age, has been unable to provide for it. When the physical energies begin to flag, business anxieties often impose a heavy strain upon

the health. The wise man at such a time should cut down his personal responsibilities as far as possible, and get rid of everything which is not absolutely necessary for his work or home. Then having done his best, he must face the future calmly and without panic. If things come to the worst, he should remember he is only one of a big crowd facing adverse circumstances today, and that it is at just such a crisis that courage is needed. All time spent repining and regretting is a waste of valuable energy. Most men find that when they are really faced with a crisis, new energy and courage flow into them, so that instead of preparing for disaster, they are ready for and even enjoy the prospect of an uphill fight.

Matters are often made worse in a time of adversity by a feeling of injured pride, and the strong desire to retain the respect of neighbours. A sensible man should believe that the only respect worth cultivating is that paid to his personal character regardless of financial circumstances. This thought has helped many to put a brave face upon a seeming calamity. The greatest help and stand-by in trials of this sort which come in middle age is the love and support of his wife. Assured of this, however harassed a man may be, he will prepare to fight to the last ditch. But adverse criticism and complaining at home can do more than anything to undermine his efforts to pull round. If a man breaks down under such circumstances, it will not be solely worry and strain of business affairs, but because there is no relief and support in his home.

### MIDDLE-AGE ATTITUDE TO YOUTH

When the training of the children has been on sensible lines, and harmony has prevailed in the family, no serious problems should arise on their account. Probably by the time the parents are middle-aged, the children are themselves married, or, at any rate, engaged. The enlarging of the family circle will give the parents new interests and happiness, if they are careful and tactful enough not to impose themselves on the younger people. But when either father or mother has been of the dominating type, the home will not be a very cheerful place for unmarried children who have not had the initiative to venture forth on their own account. Middle-aged parents, unless entirely dependent upon a willing child's services, should give a son or daughter every encouragement to get away at the earliest opportunity. Young men and women who remain at home after late adolescence are likely to be handicapped in adult life by timidity of one kind or another. While at the same time the parents are indulging their selfishness when they try to hold them. Psychologists have long ceased to be astonished when an apparently devoted daughter, who has nursed a tyrannical parent for some years, "goes gay" after the funeral, or else becomes neurotic because she is afraid to face life

on her own. A "life with mother" or with father can be poisonous one if there is any tyrannical element on either side.

Middle-aged parents should realize that their children belong to another generation and cannot have the same outlook as themselves. Although they may claim them as their "flesh and blood" they have no right to extend this sway over their mental and emotional lives. When father and son work together in the same business the elder man should grant to his son the same measure of independent thought and action as he would to a stranger. Too many fathers show jealousy of grown-up sons in one way or another, and give them less consideration than the rest of the employees. Problems of this sort are best solved by the two parties running company, at least for a time. Yet that would be a pity, for any going concern the energy and initiative of the young, and the foresight and experience of the middle-aged, are equally valuable.

### WHEN YOU RETIRE

Many an active middle-aged man who has given up business in order to enjoy the rest of his life, has found less than he hoped for in retirement. After some experience of leisure he has to confess that his joy and well-being were centred to a large extent in those very activities from which he has escaped; that is, where they were of a creative nature, and not merely routine jobs. Unless such a man has resources within himself, and knows how to plan his leisure, he may begin to suffer from an intolerable sense of boredom. It is no unusual thing for a one-time active and optimistic individual to become peevish and complaining, where time hangs heavily on his hands and he lacks a goal on which to centre his interests. The discipline of enforced regularity is often one of the best safeguards to both physical and emotional health. There is nothing more depressing than a sense of uselessness, and of not pulling one's weight. The greatest danger which besets a retired man of active disposition is the chance of his attention becoming gradually more centred upon himself and his feelings than upon any form of outside interest. If he has nothing better to do than watch his symptoms and take his temperature, so to speak, he may soon imagine that something is seriously wrong. Again, missing the stimulation which his work formerly gave him, he may get false stimulation by indulging in too much drinking, not because he really likes it, but because time hangs heavy on his hands.

### ACTIVITIES MUST NOT BE DROPPED

When a wife finds her middle-aged husband showing signs of boredom and fretfulness, she should cudgel her brains to think of some hobby that would interest him, or else embark with him upon some form of social enterprise. Many "retired" middle-aged





*Middle-aged people who wish to make provision for old age can take out an endowment policy, by which they receive a capital sum at the age of sixty-five for example, or from that age receive a yearly income which permits them to live in comfort.*



men take up agencies for goods of some description, or open small shops, or try other little ventures on their own. One wife who was greatly alarmed by the rapid deterioration of her husband after he had given up work, rented a cottage in a pretty country district, and turned the front plot of grass into a tea garden. Helping with the service, and chatting with the customers, did more for her husband's health and peace of mind before the summer was over than any specialist could have done. It is a strange fact that a man has to be as clever in spending his leisure hours as in earning the money to make them possible. But the great secret is to remain active and creative in some way all the time, for only in this way can old age be kept continually in the distance, and depression and a tendency to melancholy that so often emerge in the old, never appear.

### GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

One of the first things middle-aged people have to learn is the art of letting go gracefully. And that is about the last thing many of them want to do, especially if their interests are keen and the sense of possession strong. The wrench of parting with a loved son or daughter is often so great as to cause general unhappiness in a united family. Parents with marriageable children should prepare themselves in advance for the time of separation, and put no obstacle in the way. It is a wise man or woman who can be friendly and generous-minded to a prospective son or daughter-in-law, even when seeing cause for criticism.

Tastes vary with every age and generation. What suited father or mother may well prove intolerable to their children. But by being tolerant and considerate, the middle-aged have this to gain—they have not barred the way to friendly and open discussion with a son or daughter about the proposed marriage. It is always better for the parents to wait until they are asked their opinion, and to venture little or nothing before this time. Then their words may carry real weight and, despite the headstrong nature of youth, will sometimes influence the decision.

Sons and daughters-in-law are apt not to forget their earlier relations with their partner's parents, and goodwill shown at the early stage will be repaid with interest. These friendly links are particularly valuable in adjusting the relationship of grandparents and children.

A sensible grandparent can often help to relieve a harassed daughter or daughter-in-law of a great load of responsibility by taking complete charge of the children, and at the same time they can bring added joys to her life. But where antagonism between "in-laws" exists the grandchildren are more likely to be the direct causes of disputes and quarrels. As "go-betweens"

they will hardly help to mend matters, and they may easily receive serious psychological damage by overhearing conversations and suggestions of an unfriendly nature.

### SHOULD MIDDLE-AGED PEOPLE FOLLOW A REGIME ?

It would be cheaper, and many times better, if middle-aged men and women would attempt to regain and preserve health through a wise observance of nature's laws. Taking two meals a day; walking two or three miles at a stretch; avoiding late hours; drinking a minimum of strong tea, coffee and alcohol; shunning all causes for emotional strain; assuring internal cleanliness by the eating of fruit and fresh vegetables and a minimum of red meats . . . but nine out of ten would think life on these lines hardly worth living. Rather "a short life and a merry one" for them. The snag here is that the "merry" part usually fades all too quickly.

It is not for a moment suggested that any one should stick to such a regime without a break. Life has so many good things to offer that it would be stupid to refuse every invitation to a festivity. But the middle-aged man or woman, who has not been feeling up to concert pitch for some long time, would be surprised by the feeling of rejuvenation which is brought about by a discipline of this sort.

One note of warning here, however. Following a regime will never bring lasting benefit *in itself*. Swallowing food in a distrustful or rebellious spirit; walking a measured distance, envious of the man in the car, and ticking off the days until one is free to "let go" again is fatal to the spirit of the thing. "Putting heart into it" is absolutely essential, and only then will the results obtained be more likely to put new heart and vigour into the middle-aged man or woman in search of a new lease of health. With restored energy every form of new interests should be sought and new experiments in living should be tried. Remain versatile ! Let that be the constant aim.

### WHEN ONE IS LEFT ALONE

To lose a loved husband or wife is one of the saddest experiences that can befall any one. One needs a real philosophy to meet this loss without a feeling of hopelessness. It may seem to the middle-aged man or woman that life, in a sense, is finished for them. They are too old, and too accustomed to a settled way of living to desire to pull up their roots, and yet still young enough to realize they have a further part to play and duties to fulfil. The great remedy for sorrow of any sort, and brooding, is action—some kind of activity which will keep the mind from becoming too introspective, from dwelling too long upon "might have beens."

No one can say what any particular person should do upon the

death of husband or wife. It depends almost entirely upon the individual circumstances. Some wish to leave behind all old associations. Others cling to the same things more tenaciously than ever. It is seldom advisable, however, for a middle-aged man to try to carry on alone. An unmarried daughter, or a housekeeper is generally the solution. Living with married children has its advantages as well as its problems, and is not always successful. On the whole, an independent life is for many reasons to be preferred. A middle-aged widow or widower is often cheered by a favourite grandchild. In following the interests of this child personal sorrows are partly forgotten and new hopes and interests often kindled.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### WHAT SYMPTOMS MUST I LOOK FOR IN MIDDLE AGE ?

*I am just forty-four years and beginning to feel that real middle age is round the corner. I don't mix much with other men and never talk over my symptoms with anybody. But I often speculate as to what may be in store for me in the way of health and sickness. I should be glad if you would tell me some general symptoms of middle age so that should I experience them in the coming years I shall not be taken by surprise.*

Changes take place so slowly in middle age that it is often difficult to compare conditions from one year to another. The trend of physical life is now downwards, however gradually, and whether it will be hurried or delayed depends upon the constitution and manner of living. As a rule it becomes more difficult now to plan and carry out personal schemes, the success of which depends upon quick movement and energy. The healthy flush of youth shown in the complexion, gives place to a certain pallor, except when blood pressure gives a florid appearance. Greyness and some degree of baldness begin to show. There may be a bagginess under the eyes and wrinkles at the outer corners. Hearing may not be so keen as formerly and glasses are generally necessary for reading small print.

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of middle age is the layer of abdominal fat and the general sagging of the body. Unless increasing care is paid to the diet, dyspepsia may give trouble, and various forms of nervous irritability draw attention to the fact that something is wrong. Worry about the physical or economic situation often causes insomnia at this time. The sex life needs careful regulation, and all emotional strain should be avoided as far as possible. The sensible man—who should be his own doctor to some extent in middle age—should know that one of the secret

of health and happiness at this period lies in the *simplification* of one's needs and demands. Less food and plainer food; less worry because of fewer ambitions and desires; less responsibility because nothing is undertaken without reasonable hope of accomplishment.

### SHOULD A WIFE OF FIFTY UNDERGO BEAUTY TREATMENT ?

*My wife, who is approaching fifty, has been begging me to allow her to attend a beauty parlour and to undergo a course of treatment. She is very stout and will not diet or take exercise. She says that if her hair could be dyed and her features "smoothed out"—to use her expression—she would look ten years younger. I have saved a little money and would rather spend it in holidaying together than in paying fees to some face-lifting "specialist." But my wife is obstinate and gives me no rest. What do you advise ?*

If you think the only chance of satisfying your wife is by giving in to her on this matter by all means do so. You should count yourself lucky to have a wife who takes an increasing pride in her appearance at this age. Many women at her time of life begin to get slack and lose interest, and this is sometimes reflected in their drab clothes, uninspired faces and bored demeanour. Why not try to effect a compromise? Endeavour to make your wife see that artificial treatment alone will not remedy matters for long, but that careful dieting and walks in the open air can be a real and lasting help. Suggest that you are willing to pay for a beauty course on condition that she makes some attempt to carry out your proposal.

At the same time don't count too much upon her willingness. Wives as a rule, will take advice from almost any one but their lawful husbands. Now, if you could gain the private ear of the "specialist," a passing suggestion from that quarter might prove more effective than ten years of your pleading !

### SHOULD A MARRIED WOMAN START A BUSINESS ?

*I have an opportunity to go into the millinery business with a friend, but my husband has put his foot down, saying that, with his income, it would be undignified and look bad in the eyes of our friends. We are middle-aged people who have much in common, but lately I have felt the need for something other than the usual things which constitute a woman's daily round. Our only daughter is living abroad, and there is little or nothing of responsible activity for me. I have a flair for making hats, and since my friend is putting up the money, apart from my husband's view, there is nothing to prevent me indulging my wish for "something to do." There are moments in the day*

*when I could literally scream from sheer boredom or nerve. If you agree that I should go forward, how shall I placate my husband without real difficulty?*

You are strongly advised to push forward with your plans and to bring your husband to your point of view. If he thinks more of the opinions of his friends than of your happiness and well-being it is because he is strangely lacking in psychological perception. He should know that boredom kills indirectly more middle-aged people than almost any other disease; for in their efforts to escape a meaningless existence, they often resort to methods which destroy health and peace of mind. Between boredom and hatred is a very short span. Unused energies are worse than poison in the system. To show initiative at your age is a splendid sign, and your husband should thank his lucky stars to have such a healthy minded wife, instead of a complaining semi-invalid, as some women are at middle age.

Everybody is in business nowadays for the good of their health, not of their pocket. The best means of keeping young, and up to concert pitch, is to live a full and satisfying life after the dictates of our own hearts. Get your husband to consider these truths. When he sees that you are determined to press your scheme, it is probable he will awaken from his dream of Victorian "respectability" to new visions of what a life, lived with purpose, can achieve in the way of personal salvation.

### **MY FIRST MARRIAGE WAS IRREGULAR—SHOULD I DISCLOSE THIS ?**

*When I was young I lived with a woman who was not my wife and when she died, leaving me with our boy, I brought him up in ignorance of the circumstances. I have now met a good woman, a widow, whom I would like to marry, and she believes me to be a widower. Would it be right for me to describe myself as such when getting married?*

I am afraid you could not do that. To make a false declaration is an offence punishable by law. But surely the woman you are to marry would understand if you told her the truth. If you could bring yourself to explain the circumstances you might find more understanding and sympathy than anticipated. Skeletons of all sort in the marriage cupboard are unpleasant things, and have the habit of coming to life on the most unlikely occasions. Should you marry this widow, and the truth of your first affair be divulged by somebody in later years, she might think you had deceived her. Without a closer knowledge of your position it is difficult to give direct advice on this matter. You should weigh the issue up in the light of the foregoing remarks, and decide for yourself.



**IS MY WIFE DEVELOPING A RELIGIOUS COMPLEX ?**

*I am happily married and we have three grown-up children to bless us. Up till now, my wife and I have lived in perfect harmony and understanding, but there is a rift in the lute which may develop into a serious break. We are in the late forties and should be sensible, I suppose, but my wife, to my intense surprise, is rapidly becoming a religious fanatic and seems to be ruled by the tenets of a strange sect who hold meetings in a mission hall. I have never interfered with her religious beliefs, so that I did not forbid her to attend these meetings. But now the mission "preacher"—who is not of very high repute—appears to dominate her thoughts to such an extent that a distinct barrier is arising between my wife and myself. So great is this man's influence over her that she refuses point-blank even to discuss the matter with me. Do you think my wife is developing a religious complex? I should like your view on this state of affairs.*

**It is not altogether unusual for a woman of your wife's age to take up new cults and creeds. It is rather difficult to advise you without further knowledge of the situation. Are you unreasonably biased against the whole thing? You should be honest with yourself about this, for if you show you have a deep prejudice, naturally your wife will not discuss the thing with you. On the other hand such a mental attitude might be of benefit to your wife and help her through a difficult time. You say the "preacher" has not a good reputation. If this is so, your wife's thoughts should be turned into a different channel. You can only do this by showing sympathy, and having patience.**

**You should try to realize that your partner's normal mental outlook has been affected by the changes incident to the menopause. Be very patient and never say a bitter word you might afterwards regret. This is most important for your future and for hers. Before very long your wife's physical condition will be much more stabilized, and you may reasonably hope for a return of her sound common sense and affection for you. Meantime, proceed with caution.**

**WHY HAS MY HUSBAND LOST INTEREST IN ME ?**

*My husband and I appear to have reached the parting of the ways—if not in actual fact, certainly in the direction of our thoughts. We are middle-aged folk who once were inseparable in everything we did. My husband had no life outside my interests and always studied them. Now he is moody and sits with his paper and pipe for hours on end without troubling to ask how I have passed the hours of the day. There is nothing tangible upon which I could take him to task. We have merely become*

*"quiet" with each other—his attitude reacting upon me so that my attitude must inevitably be similar to his. I hate it. The home is not the same, and our two married children have observed this when visiting us. This "neutral" atmosphere is terrible. Why has it happened, and what shall I do about it?*

Your case is probably not nearly so desperate as you believe. If you had not experienced such happiness together before this time you might not have remarked upon the present deadlock. From your evidence you and your husband are sensitive folk and apt to pick up and react upon each other's feelings. In nearly every marriage, however harmonious, there are phases of passing dissatisfaction and discontent. Both partners sense this "hold up," and are often at a loss for an explanation. When the vague trouble has passed, it is, as a rule, no longer remembered, or at worst is as a bad dream. With the approach of middle age, care must be taken that these moods do not obtain a firm hold. Both you and your husband have lost some part of the vital interests which formerly occupied your thoughts to the exclusion of self-centredness. You are passing through a stage of slow physical transformation which tends to make you nervous and at times depressed and uncommunicative. Your husband may be the greater sufferer in this respect.

Why not try your hardest to stop reacting to his moods? Believe the old happy partner is still somewhere about, and that this is only a mask he is wearing and would willingly throw off. As he has been so good and considerate to you in the past, why not throw all self-pitying and self-communing resolutely aside, and determine you will do your utmost to bring him out of this torpor at any cost? One of you has to take the lead, and why not you? If you can afford it, propose a long holiday together in fresh surroundings, or, alternatively, a holiday apart. This mental wall which separates you will yield only to a determined assault.

### **MY MOTHER MAKES LIFE MISERABLE— WHAT SHALL I DO ?**

*I am a girl of eighteen and live alone with my mother who is middle-aged. We are totally different personalities and simply get on each other's "nerves." I know that I have faults, but my mother seems to take a pleasure in nagging and ruling me in every little thing and, unlike most mothers, she can always see the worst in me and never seems to look for my better points. Because of this continual grumbling and fault-finding, I feel sure that we shall never be able to live happily together. Practically every night I cry myself to sleep. As I am the only child I cannot desert my mother, and so we are drifting on, week after week. I feel at an utter loss to know how to act. What shall I do?*

Failing a miraculous change in your mother's attitude you must get away from home at almost any cost. You would be happier and healthier in even a menial position than in staying on under the present conditions. In any case, determine you will make a clear cut at the first opportunity. Your mother, although neither of you may recognize the fact, is really a sick woman. Unhappily, there are many like her. But the sickness is more mental, although it may have a physical origin. One could hazard, with a certainty of being correct, that she and your father were unsuited, and that her married life failed to satisfy her. Her grievances persist and are now vented upon you in various forms of disapproval. It is a neurotic condition, and very difficult to cure. But your mother has no right to spoil your life because her own was unhappy. It is really she who is deserting you by refusing that cheerful companionship which is every young girl's right.

Act firmly and without wavering. Tell her and your nearest relatives that you are miserable at home and determined to suffer no longer. At least you should have sympathy and understanding from some one who knows the circumstances. Don't let talk of "pity" and "duty" deter you. If you are satisfied that you have done your best and have been unselfish, without being able to do better things, strike out for yourself and turn a deaf ear to all entreaty. Not only will you be serving your best interests but, if you only knew it, it is the only way in which your mother can be helped. When you have left her she may realize there are traits in her character which could be changed to advantage.

## CHAPTER 15

### MIDDLE AGE AND ITS EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

#### DOES PASSION DIE AT MIDDLE AGE ?

THIS is a problem which a hundred men and women may answer in as many different ways. Upon turning to a recognized authority upon the sexual life of women one reads "The menopause is that time in a woman's life at which her sexual activities come to their natural termination; sexual death is taking place." On the other hand, specialists of equal experience and renown, declare that the woman who has enjoyed a normal love life up to this time, will remark but little change in the nature of her responses once the climacteric has been passed. What is the truth of the matter? Probably this. Most women who have

been frigid, indifferent, or only mildly interested in the sex relationship, will probably, at the change lose any capacity for response they may have had. Wives who have always experienced a happy relationship with their husbands will continue to enjoy the reciprocity, even when they are no longer capable of bearing children. Between these two extremes any number of variations are found.

There are women who, having borne one or two children, perhaps under difficult circumstances, have been obsessed by the fear of becoming pregnant again. To these, the change of life is a release from anxiety, and they recover, not lose a measure of their passionate natures. Other women, more or less frigid from early marriage, have experienced stimulation some years before the onset of the change by reason of the alteration of the glandular secretions. This condition, however, may not survive the menopause. Still another class of women, who have led a normal sex life up to the forties, find there is a gradual decrease of instinctive response, perhaps to their sorrow and sometimes dismay. In some of these cases the blame may be laid to various defects of thyroid functioning, and it is then the case that medical advice can help matters considerably.

### PHYSICAL POTENCY IS NOT ENOUGH

One thing must not be overlooked when dealing with marital relationships in middle life. It is not sufficient that a man or woman is physically potent. He or she must also be *psychically* potent. In other words, when there is little real sympathy between the partners it often happens that one—and sometimes both—experiences a sort of revulsion from the other's embrace. This "coldness," which may owe its origin to a loss of respect, or to some other perhaps not wholly conscious factor, is not likely to turn to any particular display of affection after the change has been experienced. Passion, it must be remembered, is mostly a matter of surplus energy. When the physical powers begin to weaken in late middle age it is unreasonable to expect that the sex function, so far as the normal man or woman is concerned, will continue to possess its original imperative urge.

Men also vary greatly in the degree to which they retain their sexual powers. The sowing of too many wild oats, and the leading of a dissolute life, may predispose a man to impotency long before he has reached middle age. There are young wives married to men, little more than youths, by whom they will never be able to have children, whilst husbands of sixty marry women half their age and beget a family of healthy children. Fathers of ninety and upwards are not unknown. Heredity seems to play a part where fertility to an advanced age has been noted. It is seldom that the children of unhealthy stock retain full virility up to middle

age. The average healthy man will notice some time before his sixtieth birthday that his sexual forces begin to decline, and he may expect the concluding symptoms of impotency to appear within the next decade. His general health does not suffer, as a rule, but he is more subject to nervous strain, indigestion, shortness of breath and slight disorders of the bowels.

## TWO GREAT TEMPTATIONS

Virile middle-aged men, who have been successful in business or have private means, are subjected to two major temptations to which their poorer brothers are to some degree exempt. Making money may now come to be a chief aim in life, and in this pursuit his energies can be so absorbed that sex interests recede into the background. In the endeavour to build up a fortune, or a reputation, this type of man is sometimes prepared to sacrifice his family, and to make his home only a place in which to entertain business friends.

His wife and children may live in luxury, and be able to indulge their tastes almost without stint, but they have the secret feeling that the head of the house is only taking them in his stride, and would be prepared to sacrifice them in some directions if they stood in his way. His wife, in particular, may feel that the man, to whom she was everything in the early days of struggle, is quickly becoming more or less a stranger to her. If she is without other interests her existence may seem very dreary at times. The honours and dignities that fall to her lot as the wife of a successful man cannot compensate for the lack of the close sympathy and co-operation which formerly made her life so well worth while during the times of his early struggles.

## WIFE WHO LAGS BEHIND

In the second case we have the man who has made or inherited enough money to keep him in comfort for the rest of his days. He is no longer interested in business. Now that his material well-being is assured, he feels he can enjoy life. If he and his wife have enjoyed an interesting hobby, or are fond of travel, the days may pass pleasantly enough for a time. But he is still an active and creative man, and he believes he has not exhausted all life's possibilities. Maybe his wife is now content to take things more easily, for nature may have forced her to slow down the pace. She will prefer to rest or stay at home until the time comes when he no longer presses her to accompany him, or will even show little enthusiasm should she suggest a programme herself.

She may notice, too, that her husband is often subject to unusual moods, varying between phases of strange excitement and deep depression. He arrives late for meals, or sends home conflicting



messages, has extra late hours at his club, and may find it necessary to make little occasional trips for unexpected "business purposes." His chief symptom, perhaps, will be his growing irritation with her, alternating with fits of apparent pity and remorse. She may find a compromising letter; or an indignant friend may feel compelled to break silence. Then she will have proof of what she has suspected. Her husband, after years of happily married life, has found fresh attraction elsewhere. It is a terribly distressing position for her. But she must try to face facts squarely. Energies must be spent; and when the mind of the virile man is not fully occupied, the lusts of the body force themselves more and more into consciousness and demand recognition. This kind of amorous adventure is more often a passing phase, ending in remorse and a plea for understanding and forgiveness. It is not always that a deceived wife demands a separation or divorce. In her secret heart she is more apt to look upon her husband as having suffered a relapse into his boyish, irresponsible days, from which he will emerge chastened and wiser. Perhaps she will also question whether a share of the responsibility rests with herself, for any apparent or real coldness on her part in the past.

### THREE REASONS WHY SEX DESIRE AWAKENS

Men possessed of a private income, may attract younger women of the "gold-digger" type. The utter shallowness of their natures, and their ill-concealed efforts to extract everything they can, will sooner or later disgust him and send him home cured. The greater danger arises when a cultured and charming woman is attracted by an older married man. She may not know that at his age he may be experiencing a temporary renewal of all his sex activities, and is in a state of mind in some ways akin to an adolescent. In the late "forties" and early "fifties" many men whom sex desires have not troubled particularly for some years, come again under the sway of this absorbing passion.

There are three reasons for this. Glandular changes are taking place which stimulate the reproductive functions and lead them to believe they have regained full possession of the potency of youth. Their wives, perhaps, are passing through the change of life, and may be for the time indifferent or actually averse to all intercourse. Finally, some virile men who have led a chaste life until now, feel that before old age finally settles down upon them, they must make a last effort to seek the thrills and excitements which their marriage is no longer capable of providing. They can do this, in many instances, with less compunction and feeling of guilt than could have been the case earlier in life, for if they have allowed their mental powers to slacken, a marked deterioration of the moral sense is apt to follow. Such a man never stops to count the cost,

and commits the folly of believing he can love and run away, which is a privilege reserved for a boy in his teens. When he has hopelessly compromised himself, and the affair has become semi-public, it will take him all his skill—and possibly a lot of his money—to get out of the entanglement, and only an understanding and forgiving wife will receive him back on the old terms.

There can be no greater mistake than for an active middle-aged man to let his sensual feelings take the lead. If he does not use his energies they will use him, and in ways that are almost certain to conflict with his surroundings.

### WOMAN'S "DANGEROUS AGE"

Every doctor with a wide experience of women knows of cases of women who, without previous warning, have suddenly swerved from the path of rectitude and committed some extraordinary folly. Upon the approach of the change of life many women seem to undergo an upheaval of their emotional natures. In a large number of cases the result of years of repression and dissatisfaction with a sexual partner suddenly come to a head, and revolt breaks out in some totally unexpected form. It is a mistake to lay the entire blame upon the constitutional changes taking place in the woman's system. The cause is often far more remote and altogether deeper.

Perhaps, for many years, the wife has failed to find the satisfaction she craves in her husband, and has hidden her remorse and repressed her desires, and but rarely allowed a sign of her growing distress to escape her. With the approach of the change she may feel that life has somehow passed her by, and that it is now or never if she is to extract from it any compensation for her disappointments. Her normal powers of reasoning are coloured by her heightened sensitivity due to the altered secretions in her body. There is frequently, too, an element of revenge against her husband in her deliberations.

### DANGERS OF WOMEN'S INFATUATIONS

One can truly ascribe it to a loss of balance when a woman in the "forties" or "fifties" falls madly in love with a youth young enough to be her son; or even with a son-in-law. Sometimes he happens to be an employee or even a close friend of the family. The problem in the home is a terribly distressing one. To reason with her is useless, and kindly restraint with pacification is the only available remedy. With great good luck this dangerous phase may soon pass over and leave a wife full of contrition and shame—a condition often to be feared almost as much as the former. A wise family doctor may also be of great help by explaining to her how the change of life can affect both the mind and the emotions.

Once the phase has passed, never reproach the woman, or make her unhappy about it. Just show your happiness in her return to normality, and if possible, arrange for her to take a holiday or a change of some sort.

Unmarried women of middle age are equally liable to these emotional outbreaks. Sometimes they take the form of persecuting a public character by sending anonymous letters or by waylaying him. Women of hitherto unimpeachable morals may try to seduce much younger men, or even bring charges against a perfectly innocent stranger. All these cases need the skilled care of a trained physician who will understand the real basis of the situation. Unreserved condemnations and punishment serve little purpose and can be cruel. To understand all may not be to forgive all, but, when it is recognized that the great majority of these women are mentally and emotionally sick, the otherwise harsh judgment passed upon them will often be softened.

### RE-MARRIAGE AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

A large proportion of widows and widowers of all ages re-marry. Where there has been no family by the first marriage there are fewer problems to contend with. Re-marriage statistics show that the ages of the contracting parties vary much more than is the case in first marriages. In a Registrar's office in London quite recently there was a double wedding. Father and son married widow and daughter. "How romantic!" one might say off-hand. More so, perhaps, than imagined; for it was the father who married the widow's daughter; the son took the widow for his bride.

A widow, or widower, with children approaching adolescence, will have to think carefully before marrying again. If either has a pronounced strain of jealousy, or is short-tempered, the future life may be difficult. Under some conditions it is advisable to place the children away from home whenever practicable. Sometimes shortly after re-marriage one of the couple has found that his or her young children are not acceptable to the step-parent. In fairness to both parent and child, it would be better if a near relative could be persuaded to bring them up until a certain age. This plan has saved many a new venture from going to pieces.

When a widower marries a woman very much younger than himself, the result is often precarious. He may have children of the same age, or even older than his wife, who will criticize his choice and find occasions for interference. Only when there is a great spirit of tolerance will family reunions be at all harmonious for the slightest irritation or misunderstanding and the rankling of small but ever-growing annoyances will assume enormous proportions with the passage of years.

If his young wife is intelligent, and understanding, she may bring

about a reunion in course of time. But should her husband's family make trouble it is hardly reasonable to expect that she will go out of her way to conciliate them.

### MIDDLE-AGED HUSBANDS AND YOUNG WIVES

When there is some great disparity in the age of husband and wife, the marriage can either be a very happy one or lead soon to disaster. In the former case, a healthy man in full possession of his faculties will find his knowledge of the world and men a tremendous asset, and can guide and advise where a younger man would, to a great extent, be ignorant. An attractive young wife, tied to a decrepit mate, interested only in his own comforts, may soon begin to look for an opportunity to widen her interests. She may try to solve the major problem of her life in a drastic manner, and that can only lead to unhappiness. It must be pointed out that she cannot really be blamed. The responsibility for such a marriage rests with the man, whose knowledge of life should allow him to see the problem arising.

Few greater sorrows can afflict a home than when a middle-aged husband or wife falls ill with a serious nervous breakdown, or shows symptoms of increasing mental instability. Almost up to the present time there has existed a conspiracy to keep silent about such illness, as though it were something to be ashamed about. But, as with sex, the more that is understood and made plain and intelligible, the greater the chances are of the difficulties being met.

A serious mental trouble rarely comes about without a period of preliminary warning. It is true that a person can be unbalanced for a time after a sudden shock, but when the effects have worn off, there is generally a return to normal, unless some constitutional instability exists. Many middle-aged people who suffer serious breakdowns have been gradually getting ill for years. Then comes the time when their natural reserves of strength are failing somewhat, and a particularly difficult emotional situation confronts them. Although perhaps only those nearest to them are aware of a peculiarity in their natures—hidden mostly from others—the painful situation can develop quickly and distress all about them.

### INSANITY AND ITS INHERITANCE

Not a few middle-aged men and women harbour secret fears of losing their mental balance because of some history of insanity in the family. This is in itself ridiculous, for insanity is rarely inherited—and then only in certain forms which can be avoided.

When there is reason to suspect that a middle-aged man or wife is behaving abnormally in any way, a medical man should be consulted without delay. Perhaps a first sign that all is not well is increasing sleeplessness. Every effort should be made to combat

this without recourse to sleeping drugs. For drugs should be used most sparingly, and only as a last resort, and under the most careful supervision. The lightest of food after midday; walks in the open air long enough to be slightly fatiguing; being read to upon retiring; playing parlour games when possible; every natural expedient should be tried in the effort to induce restful nights.

### TAKING CARE OF A MENTAL PATIENT

The ordinary nervous breakdown is often a passing phase of emotional disturbance, brought about by some circumstance or condition of life which the patient feels unable to meet. Perhaps it is something which he has feared or fought against for a long time, or is caused partly by continued neglect of his health, and the refusal to take reasonable precautions. Revolt at some real or fancied injustice; extreme anger or disappointment; uncontrollable jealousy and desire for revenge; over-concentration on work combined with worrying conditions at home . . . these and many other factors contribute to bring about a collapse. Rest, freedom from worry, harmonious surroundings and cheerful companionship are often sufficient to restore the health in due course. But the middle-aged man or woman who has passed through this trying experience should be warned that the old ways of life must be abandoned or greatly modified. Body and mind must be given the chance to work harmoniously together, and no liberties taken with one to the hurt of the other.

Many patients inflicted with a mental illness impose so severe a strain upon the family that it becomes impossible to keep them at home. Then the doctor will probably advise that they should enter a mental hospital for a time as a voluntary case. The patient signs a paper, of his own free will, stating his desire to be received on this basis. There is no need for certification. Relatives and friends can pay visits once or twice a week. Upon the giving of a few days' notice the patient can be removed at any time. In the case of a poor man or woman, treatment is free, or a nominal weekly sum is paid by arrangement with the authorities.

### MENTAL ILLNESS AND THE MIDDLE-AGED

No one can tell how long a mental illness, having reached a certain stage, is likely to last, or how it will terminate. Sometimes in the case of melancholia, to which middle-aged people are more subjected, the symptoms begin to clear after a few weeks, and the patient makes a complete recovery within three to six months. Their friends will be glad to know that, as a rule, there are no ill after-effects, and often but very slight memories of the experience.

There is a certain type of child, not over-courageous by nature, who finds out early in life that it can get many privileges by



pretending to be suffering in some way. If he is unhappy at school, or wishes to escape some unpleasant task, he will develop a bad headache, be sick, or have a sore throat. When this trick has succeeded a few times he soon becomes skilful at finding further excuses, and is seldom at a loss to put up a good reason for receiving special consideration from his parents and friends. Unfortunately, this habit of deceiving may take deep root, and persist into adult life. When an impatient husband complains to his wife of some neglected duty, she may plead indisposition, and punish him by staying in bed for a day or two, leaving him to fend for himself. A hard-worked wife, ready to depart with a surly husband on some long-anticipated excursion, may find that to spite her he has developed a splitting headache with symptoms of high fever, and is in need of peace and rest at home with the pipe and paper that are his habitual companions.

A vain woman, living in a house which suits her husband's means, but does not come up to her standard, may declare the place is unhealthy, and that she will never be well whilst living there. Between Monday morning and Saturday night she can bring the changes from neuralgia to housemaid's knee, and so pester her husband that in desperation he gives in to this form of blackmail and agrees to move. By crying "wolf" too often, however, when a real illness does come about, this type of person gets little sympathy.

### PARENTAL BLACKMAIL

It is a sad state of affairs when a middle-aged person resorts to this low form of trickery to wring concessions from others. A jealous mother will have "one of her bad turns" whenever a courting daughter wants to go out with her boy; a possessive father may find his heart "very bad indeed this evening" should his daughter-housekeeper want to visit the cinema without him. The idea in both cases is to fill the daughter with such a sense of guilt and neglected duty that by going against her parent's wishes she will derive no pleasure from her outing.

Examples such as these can be multiplied indefinitely. They are problems which need firm handling both for the good of the swindlers and the happiness of their long-suffering victims. Any one who feels that he or she is being victimized in this way—and it is often done under the plea of kindness and great care for one's welfare—should remember that they have the right to freedom in life. At the risk of appearing hard of heart, ungrateful and unminding, a firm stand should be taken at any cost.

There are some middle-aged wives, with a streak of jealousy in their natures who live in constant fear of some younger and more attractive woman seducing their husbands. A maid, a girl in the office, the young wife of one of their friends—all in turn come

under suspicion. On the other hand, there is the suspicious husband who will accuse his wife of encouraging the attentions of any man who may be about the premises; will spy upon her when she goes out, and inquire minutely as to how she spends her day. Should his wife receive a letter with an unrecognized postmark, he must stand over her when she opens it, and he will dictate the reply to any communication from a male relative or friend. A suspected husband or wife, who passes year after year under this intolerable censorship, may decide in the end to give justification for all these suspicions. So it happens that one reads of a pillar of society who has "astounded and outraged" the respectable neighbours by carrying on some "sordid" intrigue. The grown-up children may look askance—before the public—at these escapades, but in their own minds they will partly understand, even if they cannot bring themselves to condone.

It may still be many years before most couples come to realize that marriage should not mean a "concentration camp" for two. Where there is no trust or confidence between man and wife, neither "barbed" tongues nor jealous sentinels can prevent one or the other breaking out in an attempt to gain a long-lost freedom. There is no greater mistake than to believe that middle-age husbands and wives "don't care." There is often a bitter and rebellious spirit which has decided to bide its time and await the day when, either in secret or in the open, the cry of "Evens!" will go up.

### PROBLEMS OF SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

Qualified observers state that only one marriage in ten is successful, and five or six are obvious failures. There are many reasons why both man and woman find it a life's task to understand each other and work together to make any sort of harmony possible. It is curious but undeniable that the very characteristics in a girl which led a man to fall in love with and marry her at twenty-five may prove to be intolerably irritating before middle age is reached. What a bride of twenty thought magnificent in her bridegroom, the mature spouse of forty-five may spurn as childish and self-centred and altogether to be despised. And, what is more, she may voice these opinions in various ways when disillusion sets in. Only those married couples doomed to bore each other to death can hold the same views in all things in the "forties" as were cherished in the "twenties." Growth is the law of life, and marriage as a forcing ground provides the finest opportunities imaginable. That so many rank and noxious weeds, as well as fine flowers, spring up can be no matter for surprise. What is often more astonishing is how many seemingly unsuitable couples do manage to hold together for years on end.



*Not the least of the many rewards for the pangs of separation that follow the marriage of the children, is their return with their own offspring. Then it is that the middle-aged recover in grandparenthood the passionate thrills of their own parenthood of many years before.*

When a couple should separate is a problem which only man and wife are qualified to answer. Outside advice is ignorant and presumptuous. There are married men who never intended to "support" a wife, but looked for coddling themselves. There are wives who wanted everything from a husband but meant to give as little as possible in return. There are men with no sense of obligation to wife, children or friends; and wives who ask nothing better than to "eat" their family and snarl at all who come near. There are men who treat sex as a joke, and see in it nothing but an animal function, and women who have been taught as children that the devil put sex in the world, and they can only serve heaven by quietly ignoring it and refusing it all their lives.

Some men are incapable of making the home the be-all and end-all of existence, and seek contacts outside; and one finds wives who are so proud of the house that every new-comer is asked for his credentials, and warned off if not up to standard. Again, other men treat their wives as if they were delicate dolls and place them on so high a pedestal, that the poor women are afraid to move hand or foot for fear of falling off; other wives think all after-marriage romancing is a pack of nonsense and that a man should be "above that sort of thing."

### WHEN A SEPARATION IS WISE

Whenever a man or woman arrives at middle age without having experienced some complete satisfaction of their deepest emotional, physical or mental needs one of two courses is open to them. They can adopt an attitude of resignation—as do the majority—and seek consolation in lesser things, or determine that should the opportunity for expansion come along they will never let it pass by unanswered.

The world, today, enriched by a fuller understanding, is not so quick to judge and condemn as in past generations. It is becoming increasingly recognized that a couple whose antagonistic points of view cannot by any means be reconciled are better living apart. By remaining together they poison their own lives and those of their family, and spread disharmony in every direction with all its rankling bitterness and sorrow.

Separation need not be for ever after all. Loneliness sometimes discloses aspects of life which have not previously been experienced, and gives an opportunity for deeper reflection upon one's destiny. There is something tragic about a marriage which had lasted for twenty years or more, and then ends in separation or divorce. Yet nevertheless, if the separation can be achieved without bitterness, it is far better than living a miserable life together and destroying completely the happy memories of early days.



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### SHOULD I MARRY MY SWEETHEART OF TWENTY YEARS AGO?

*For two years before the war I courted a girl and we corresponded while I was in the army. In 1916 I was wounded in the foot, and somehow a report reached home that my leg had been amputated. Despite my frequent letters to her I got no reply, and I learned later that she had been heard to say she had no use for a man with one leg. Hearing she had married another man, I secured a berth in the north where I am still living. A few years ago I visited the old spot and ran across my old love. Despite the passage of years she was embarrassed in telling me of her marriage. It had not been happy, and she confessed that if she had known the truth she would not have been faithless to me. A year ago her husband died and she wrote asking me to resume the old courtship. But I have the care of an old mother, and although I feel sorry for this middle-aged widow who is still attractive, I told her I could not marry her. I hear she has taken to drink and doubtful company. Do you think I am to blame? And should I reconsider my refusal?*

No blame attaches to you whatever. And, unless you are very deeply in love with your old sweetheart, and feel that life would be happier with her, you should think carefully before changing your mind. Her character does not appear to be very stable. It seems strange that she should ignore your letters after you were wounded, and marry another man. Possibly she did not want to "know the truth"—which you had already told her—but at this time was infatuated by a new-comer on the scene. Drink and doubtful company are weak ways of reacting to a disappointment. Should you marry this widow, and keep your old mother in your home, reasons for disputes might soon arise. You would also have the task of reforming her from a liking for dubious pleasures. Finally, the reasons which made you fall in love as a youth with a young girl might not hold good once you really became intimate again. Twenty years or more is a sufficient time to change some characters almost beyond knowledge. But you alone are capable of making a decision.

### MY HUSBAND CONSORTS WITH YOUNG WOMEN—SHOULD I PROTEST?

*At fifty years of age, I am not the woman I was; this is a fact I frankly admit. I am tired and certainly worn after bringing up a family of four on an income that was never very large. But that my husband should seek the company of other women*



*is something that hurts, and hurts deeply. My husband has always been considerate, more or less, but I freely admit that I do not love him. We have reached the point where toleration is the basis of our home life. Nevertheless, I am grieved that I should be slighted for other and younger women. In particular there is one girl in the town who is often seen about with him. Should I talk frankly with him on the point, or is there nothing for me to do? Please, give me your opinion.*

On your own admission you no longer love your husband. He must have had many opportunities to perceive this, for however skilful you might have been in hiding your feelings it is unlikely he had no clue to the real state of affairs. If his is a nature demanding sympathy and affection, and he sees no reason to be bound by the conventional moral code, you can hardly wonder at his looking for someone to supply what he misses in you. He may remember his family obligations, and what you may have meant to him in the past, and have no intention of getting himself entangled in an emotional affair which would be difficult to hide or shake off.

Your best plan is to have a straight talk with him, and tell him what you know or have heard about his philandering. Your sense of pride should not persuade you to hold him to you if he wishes to be free. Where there is no love there can soon be hatred and two at enmity in a home would be disastrous for your children. In any case he is bound to provide for you, so that unless there is some genuine effort on both sides to effect a reconciliation you would possibly be better apart.

### **MUST I BE UNFAITHFUL TO GET A DIVORCE ?**

*Soon after I married I realized that what I had thought to be love was nothing more than a friendly disposition. Our courtship had been prosaic and, at times, I felt there was something lacking. On many occasions, during the years of married life I have bitterly asked the question why friends and acquaintances should constitute themselves matchmakers and tell young people they are suited to each other. Our married life has been one of tolerance without either warmth or real affection or any serious quarrels. Unhappily, my wife bore me no children and we are both now over forty.*

*About two years ago I met a woman whom I ought to have married. I have realized for the first time what love can really be. I have hidden nothing from her, but am left depressed and dissatisfied with my married condition. Yet must I or my wife commit an act of infidelity in order that I may enjoy to the full the love that has entered my life?*

An Eastern proverb hints that whatever course we take there comes a time when we wish we had chosen the opposite. What you have missed in your marriage has, until now, been more or less imaginary. You have also to count up some things you may have gained, and which are not perhaps quite so apparent. Thousands of marriages, beginning with great passion on at least one side, are lived, after the first few years, without much semblance of that "tolerance" which has marked your match. If you were "persuaded" into the alliance, it is bad luck; but you should have had sufficient gumption to see that it was unsuitable in some ways. And, of course, the fact of your wife being barren has not helped matters.

But have you paused to consider the selfishness of your inquiry? Do you not remember your marriage vows—"for better or for worse"? What about your wife's future? You do not say whether you have discussed the problem with her, but it would appear that, so far, you have not done so, which is all to the good in view of what my advice will be. You say she is over forty. Is she to be thrown over simply because you want your future with another woman? There is such a thing as facing one's difficulties with chin up and a determination to make the best of things. That is the course you should adopt, for you are married to a decent woman who, in your own words, is tolerant. She, for all you know, may have the regrets you have; but life in your household goes on, apparently comfortably enough for you make no specific complaint of your partner's general attitude towards you after years of married life.

The new divorce legislation applies in your case in two aspects only. You would have to desert your wife completely for a period of three years, and the action for divorce must be at *her* request, not yours. Other than that, infidelity is the only cause that can be put forward.

But, again, it should be pointed out that your need is definitely selfish, and you should be manful, sticking to your partner as you once promised to do, always remembering that, being your wife, *she* is the first to be considered.

#### FATHER IS A TERRIBLE BULLY—SHALL WE LEAVE HIM?

*Father has been a church-worker for thirty-five years; but he is as narrow as can be, and when he heard that my sister had lately visited a young man—who is courting her with a view to marriage—at his lodgings, in front of a room full of people he called her an abominable name, suggesting that she was damned for ever as an abandoned woman. My sister is a sweet, good-living girl, and my father is a stern disciplinarian with no thought for anything outside the etiquette of right living. He used not to*

*be so terrible a man, but of late years he has changed a lot, and my sister and I, who live alone with him, are considering making a home of our own elsewhere. Do you think it would be wrong to leave a middle-aged parent and set up a little home for ourselves?*

You would be justified in leaving your father, who shows a strong neurotic strain in his character. From what you say he is of the utterly selfish, opinionated type who would bend the world to their point of view or die in the attempt. If he continues to remain so "terrible" he may develop mania, and perhaps, later on, need some measure of control. His age is probably a factor in his increasing disposition to bully and browbeat. When a man gets to the point of calling an irreproachable daughter vile names in public, his mental condition should be carefully watched. Something is radically wrong somewhere.

You could have a quiet chat with your church minister before deciding upon the next step. Perhaps he could recommend a home for your father where he would be well looked after but not spoiled. Once you knew he was comfortably settled, you would be happier yourselves. But a man of this type should not be given the chance of making unhappy those who by reason of their relationship cannot so well stand up to him.

### SHOULD I FORSAKE MY HUSBAND FOR A YOUNGER MAN?

*Mine is a confession. At forty-eight years of age I have fallen in love with a young man friend of my husband's who is often at our house. My feelings for him are overpowering and I know that he thinks a lot about me. He is most attractive and I am drawn to him in a way I cannot describe; but it is sufficient to say that I find great difficulty in concealing the fact from my husband. Once when this young man was leaving I kissed him good night, and whether or not he regarded this as a "motherly" gesture I do not know, but he asked me to kiss him again. The kiss he gave me in return was something I cannot forget. Please do tell me what course I should adopt. I feel that I need this younger man, and I am torn between my feeling and my duty to my husband.*

Think over the situation carefully. Weigh up the odds. In order to be able to do this you must put your feelings aside for a time at whatever cost. If you have any *real* love for this young man you will not want to lead him into trouble. Begin an affair with him, and who knows to what it will lead. One thing is certain. You will not be able to deceive your husband for long, and when he finds out that will mean the end of two pleasant relationships. If he is a jealous or spiteful man he may do your young friend a

rious injury, and you may be either cast adrift, or left disgraced. There are silly women and foolish young men who never stop to count the cost of a few minutes' forgetfulness. If a wise counsellor had the ear of your friend this is what he might say to him. "Do you fancy yourself being saddled with the future responsibility of a woman old enough to be your mother? Do you know that a woman passing through the change of life has often little control over her emotions and will do things she would even hate the thought of doing in normal times? Are you aware that if you encourage her now she may easily get some form of mental illness if you threw her over, or if her husband and friends begin to blame her? Are you tough enough to withstand the public gibes your conduct would call forth, or shelter her from them? Do you realize that you are not quite normal yourself, and need the company of healthy young women of your own age?"

talk of this sort would make your young friend stop and think unless he was as careless about what might happen to you as to himself.

Lastly, what about your husband? If he has been good to you, and still loves you, your conduct would ruin his life. Is that an agreeable thought? There are rare moments in nearly everybody's career when some great emotional opportunity and temptation is offered. But they are the moments most fraught with dangerous possibilities. Tell this young man that you would like to regard him as a son, and do not encourage familiarity of any sort. Avoid seeing him alone. Take up some new interest that will use your energies, even tire you somewhat. If you find the strain unbearable ask him to stop visiting the house, if only for your sake. You may have months of bitter struggle before you, but there will come a time, probably not long delayed, when you will thank heaven that you did not commit the greatest folly of your life.

#### IS THERE A DANGER OF MY HUSBAND "GOING GAY" ?

*I am a woman devoted to my husband, home and children. In my younger days I danced and enjoyed myself, but at fifty I am a matronly figure, interested in things generally, but always remembering that I am the mother of a family. My husband has not developed to my category . . . he is a gay, dancing type, and is always about with my girls and their friends. He is a fine, generous-hearted man and I am proud of him in most things, but lately I feel that his "Peter Pan-ish" attitude to life is not at all commensurate with his years. When people pass the remark that "Your husband is such a young man for his years," I am irritated. I should hate it to be thought that he was a little on the "gay" side. Need I have any fears or perturbation in this regard?*

If your husband is consistently kind to you, is both a good husband and father, you can afford to overlook this "gay" streak in his character if it does not go to extremes. It is presumed he does not seek young society except when in the company of his daughter and their friends. He apparently belongs to rather a peculiar type. With some men a certain part of their mentality seems to have been arrested at adolescence. They are "boys" until the end of their days, good-natured and generous, but with very little depth of character in some directions. They will continue to be interested in the things which amused them as lads, and are entirely out of their depth when it comes to dealing with some subjects demanding more mature thought.

When psychological growth is interrupted in this way, only a adaptable wife can accommodate herself to such a husband. If she is inclined to be studious, or serious minded, she may drive her husband to a more childish mode of life than ever, or else cause him to be depressed and fretful. There is little reason to fear that your husband will be so "gay" as to bring his family name into disrepute. This type is seldom deeply passionate. Intelligence and concentration are not lacking; indeed there is often real talent in some direction. But the fact remains that men of this nature seldom seem to get to grips with life.

## SECTION VI

# OLD AGE

## CHAPTER 16.—PROBLEMS OF OLD AGE

### EXPECTATION OF LIFE

**A**CCORDING to the statistics of the Registrar-General, the average expectation of life has almost doubled compared with a generation ago, and the proportion of people over sixty-five years of age in this country is still rising. If the average age of a man's grandparents was fifty-five or over, today he is likely to live till he is over seventy. Heredity plays an important part in any man's expectation of life. Very old people generally spring from exceptionally fertile stock and themselves are frequently the parents of a numerous family, and this is particularly the case where they have kept their faculties keen and alert.

One of the main problems, indeed, of old age is the preservation of full mental ability, for the senile are a trial both to themselves and their children. Second childhood is really a relapse to the childish days, but with this important difference; children are



mostly responsive and show marked affection for those about them, but old people gradually lose the power of expressing gratitude, and are occasionally fretful and cantankerous, finding fault with everything and everybody. There, of course, are exceptions to the rule for there are many splendid old people, whose character is an example to their descendants.

### THE YOUNG OLD

Many common ideas about old age tend to be over-estimated. "Being very careful," for example, is not so common a cause of keeping young as many people think. This is not to say, of course, that men or women can play "ducks and drakes" with their health with impunity, but that a strong constitution (probably inherited) and a sensible life have much more to do with it.

It must not be inferred from this that the inheritance of a frail physique will prevent a man or woman from reaching old age. On all sides we have proof of the contrary, but in these cases, they have had to take more care, and have not been able to expend their energy in the same way.

The men or women who reach old age in the possession of all their faculties and vigour are always objects of admiration. Generally they take an interest in their personal appearance and in everybody around them, attempting to keep their body healthy, and their mind clear by little outings, occasional pleasures and a simple mode of life.

### A WISE OLD MAN

Goethe, one of the world's most famous poets, has left a wonderful example of what a virile old man should be. He was still writing a masterpiece at eighty, and planning future work with all the zest of a youth. Goethe was never tired of insisting that only the active man knows his strength and weakness, and while he wrote books full of wisdom and counsel, he used to say, aside, with a twinkle in his eyes, that all theory was grey : experience alone brings knowledge. When he was seventy-four he fell violently in love with a beautiful girl of nineteen, and for a time thought of asking her hand in marriage.

The aged poet was once at a concert where a famous tenor sang a melancholy song, deploring that love was a fantasy and a dream. Goethe was furious, and seizing a pencil sent him the following note :

*"I have loved and now I begin to love more than ever. Today as yesterday the stars are shining. Avoid as you would the plague, those whose heads are bowed in woe. Live always as if life were just beginning."*

In this he wrote the secret of eternal youth.

Old age is supposed to begin at sixty-five, but some people are old long before this, and others manage to postpone it for a

number of years. At this time, however, illnesses of various sorts and the mortality rate increase. Many thoughtful old people would almost die rather than draw attention to their personal complaints, but others keep up a constant whine throughout the day. If through accident, or some form of bodily infirmity, their movements are at all restricted, their grumbling may increase to such a degree that they can become a menace to the peace of the household. In this case, it is best if they can be given a separate room and persuaded to stay there, except at certain times. Most elderly people appreciate a room of their own, however tiny, for it is often a serious trial for them to be subjected to the noise and bustle of a young family especially when they are incapable of taking any part in their activities.

### SIGNS OF ADVANCING AGE

Trembling limbs, wrinkling skin, failing muscles, poor digestion, quick variations of bodily temperature, increasing great irritability, spasms of weeping, loss of memory, living in the past, deafness and failing vision are all unmistakable signs of old age. Now, even after the smallest exertion, they will tend to feel exhausted. Extra strain of any sort can affect the heart; and cerebral hemorrhage, which can easily prove fatal, is a serious danger. But perhaps the surest sign of the advance of old age is a certain hardening of the emotional nature. Men and women who would have been deeply distressed at some unfortunate happening a few years before, now seem to be but little affected, and indeed in some cases almost indifferent. The death of a relative or near friend, the troubles of a son or daughter may make but a passing impression. They must not be blamed for this for they are no longer capable of a warm rush of feeling and ready to sympathize with people in trouble.

### PROBLEM OF MAINTAINING HEALTH

Thomas Parr, the Englishman who lived to be one hundred and fifty, was not killed by his years, but by the rich and unaccustomed food given him when he was feasted at the court in London. With advancing age habits should be greatly simplified. Old people who are still partial to rich and heavy foods throw a heavy tax upon their digestive organs, and occasionally raise their blood pressure seriously. It is rare that a heavy eater lives to a really old age, unless he lives such an active life that it uses up all his surplus store of energy. If he or she lives a sedentary life, an old man or woman would be wise to cut down eating considerably and to choose a diet with care, making it well balanced but not faddy. Cornaro, a Venetian nobleman, nearly died at forty as a result of intemperate living. Then he reduced his diet to twelve

ounces of solid food a day and fourteen ounces of wine. He recovered his health and lived to be ninety-eight, remaining healthy and cheerful almost to the last. Most old people eat from three to four times this amount and, as a consequence, overstrain their digestion. Prescribing diets is more interesting than following them. People begin well on Monday and get bored before the week is out. But it is well for aged people to reduce the quantity of solid food, and the number of the meals—at least, the substantial ones. A glass of hot water two or three times a day is not only a tonic, but also helps to cleanse the system. Taken the last thing at night and in the early morning, hot water can often do more than any drug or medicine. An occasional mild saline purge is also of benefit. Little flesh food is needed, but more of the kind of fresh fruit and vegetables which help digestion. A glass of good red wine is often valuable as an occasional pick-me-up, except when expressly forbidden by the doctor.

### ELDERLY PEOPLE SHOULD KEEP ACTIVE

There are numerous examples of professional and business men who have remained at work until they were long past eighty. In these cases mental activity seems to have reduced physical wear to a very slow process, and certainly it is a matter of common observation that old people who have nothing much to do, and plenty of time on their hands, soon develop all sorts of complaints, real or imaginary. From this it would seem that the ideal is to occupy the mind so fully, that it has no time to dwell upon personal feelings. When Chevrue, the great French chemist, was celebrating his hundredth birthday one of his guests demanded: "Tell us, sir, have you always had a good digestion?" The famous centenarian laughed back: "I really cannot say for I have never noticed!" Every one knows old people who are ready to trot out the exact symptoms of any disease on the slightest opportunity. There is a story that one of these "grouchers" saved his money to consult a famous specialist. After the doctor had listened to the patient's long recital of ills, aches, fears and suspicions, he examined him thoroughly and then promised to send on the prescription by post. Opening the letter the astonished "invalid" read: "Live on a shilling a day and earn it by the sweat of your brow!"

Elderly people who settle down to "enjoy" bad health make life very difficult for the rest of the family, and many promising young people, women in particular, have sacrificed their lives to parents, who took it all as a matter of course and never thought of showing any gratitude. In many instances, of course, it would be unwise to leave the invalid, but many of these would be better off in the care of a stranger, for no old person should be allowed to

drain the life out of another who has still his or her life to live.

In normal cases, however, old age should come peacefully and without any particular discomfort. Many old people retain their faculties to the last, and it is noticeable here that their minds have remained active and intelligent even when they were bed-ridden and helpless.

### PROBLEM OF SHELTERING THE AGED

Eighty men out of a hundred who reach the age of sixty-five and are no longer able to work, depend to some extent upon the charity of relations or public bodies, but since the establishment of old age pensions the one time universal fear of ending their days in a workhouse infirmary has been greatly diminished. When an old man or woman is left alone in the world nowadays, he or she is generally faced with a choice of living with a married son or daughter, or eking out a lonely existence in lodgings. If they have been on good terms with their children's families no doubt they will be welcomed there with open arms, but it is a big risk to take if there has been any ill-feeling or distrust on either side. In a family quarrel nearly every member is embroiled, and an aged guest, though perhaps contributing something to the household budget, may be made to feel in the way and a burden upon the rest. This humiliating knowledge may easily prey upon the mind of a sensitive old man or woman, and cause endless hours of misery. Here it would undoubtedly be better if old people could be put in a home, where they might have less comfort but would be spared the strain of staying where they felt that they were only under sufferance.

In large families every one should contribute something to the upkeep of an old parent left without means of support. A home can often be found for an old person with a friend or in some family who would be glad to give him his little comforts. Part of the year could be spent perhaps in paying visits to the children, and life would pass off fairly easily and pleasantly.

### NURSING THE BED-RIDDEN

Another important point to remember is that it is often inconvenient to nurse bed-ridden old people in a small house, especially where there are a number of children. Sufferers from chronic malignant diseases had better be sent to special institutions, as their doctor will be glad to recommend them to a place. Furthermore there are many almshouses and homes for old people founded by wealthy benefactors. For the most part these are pleasant and comfortable, but competition for places is keen, and it may be some time before any vacancies are available.

The main thing to bear in mind throughout in dealing with old





Amongst the compensations of old age is to be numbered the birthday celebration when your descendants visit you, seeking by their presence and their gifts, to give you sincere proof of their respect and affection. In such circumstances old age is never lonely: rather it is joyful and happy.



people who have been left "badly-off," is to try and increase their feeling of self-respect. This is essential, and without it all other plans are useless, for most of the mental breakdowns of old age are due directly or indirectly to grief and depression aggravated by narrow circumstances and lack of sympathy.

### HOW TO KEEP THE OLD HAPPY AND AMUSED

Old people who have supported themselves by manual labour are apt to find the time drag slowly when they are no longer able to be active. If they can be induced to take up some handicraft it can often prove a godsend for it will give them the feeling of doing something of worth, and creative work will always chase away depression. Moreover it can provide them with quite a small amount of pocket money. If they are fond of reading, a subscription to a good library will be a great boon, for they can choose their books from current lists, and generally get the book they want on the spot. Wireless is another godsend to old people, especially the bed-ridden, for it prevents them becoming bored and keeps them in touch with the world. In most towns a secretary can be hired and kept in order for under two shillings a week, and special earphones can be supplied for the deaf.

### SUDDEN CAPRICES OF OLD PEOPLE

Sometimes old people for no apparent reason begin to show signs of dislike and even hostility. Generally this is accompanied by a distaste for food and long relapses into silence. This is sometimes a passing phase due to some physical change, but when the condition persists, a doctor should be consulted. At these times old people must be treated with tact and the utmost consideration for their nerves become easily strained. Of course, a certain discipline must be enforced, for the situation may easily become insupportable or the invalid do himself harm. In certain cases these attacks may last or become more and more frequent. A physician will diagnose treatment, and if the mind is really failing, he will be able to recommend some mental home.

Another problem, too, may arise. As their minds become enfeebled some old people try to change their wills, often in some wild caprice or whim of the moment. In these cases the will can be legally set aside if it is proved that the testator was not in his usual state of mind when it was drawn up. The family doctor should be able to testify to this.

### CONSOLATION FOR THE AGED

Edward Carpenter, the writer, declared in his later years that there were only two things in life really worth living for, the glory and beauty of nature and the glory and beauty of human love and

friendship. Whatever their personal religious faith, most old people in looking back over their lives would agree they had known their happiest moments in enjoying beautiful scenery and being surrounded by their friends. One of the greatest tragedies of old age is the loss one by one of old friends, for there is no one to take their place, and all they have left is their memories. Many old people live largely in the past, and gradually withdraw from the world given over to the activities of younger men and women. Consequently they are seldom dismayed at the thought of leaving this life and being released from a burden of increasing problems and difficulties.

### PEACE AND DIGNITY OF OLD AGE

Natural old age, free to a great extent from actual disease or pain, demands neither pity nor condolence. It does not fear death all like the young; in fact it may be said that in many instances has lost the capacity to fear. No one should sorrow at the passing of an elderly person. The worn-out body has followed natural law, for the processes of destruction and renewal must always continue. In those cases where an ageing man or woman has seemed to cling to the good things of life, it will more often be found that the things have remained, but the good has long since gone out of them.

The more the old people reflect that dying—with its freedom from all pain at the last, as physicians assure us—is only a falling into deeper sleep, so much more will they reconcile themselves to the "great adventure." All existence is an unceasing process of unfoldment which must have its passive, as well as its active, stages. The philosophical soul will find both consolation and hope in this truth.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### SHOULD AN OLD WOMAN SEEK NEW FRIENDS ?

*I am seventy years of age and live with a married daughter. My husband has been dead several years. We had five children, three sons and two girls. The younger girl was killed in an accident when only seventeen and that terrible happening has left a mark upon my heart. The three boys went to South Africa where they married and now have families of their own. Hardly ever do I hear from them directly. I have only this married daughter and her children. The latter consider me a nuisance, as does my son-in-law. My daughter is a good woman, but extremely narrow and never has much time for a chat with me. And so I am lonely, and often sit and wonder if I have been at*

*all responsible for the way things have worked out. Would you advise an old woman to join a pen club, or are they for young folk only?*

Without knowing more of the circumstances of your life it is impossible to say if you have reason to reproach yourself for attitude of your children. When your first great grief came upon you did you by any chance shut off a part of your affection from the rest of your family? If so they may have sensed that something was missing in you and felt neglected. It is, indeed, a strange thing for children to abandon a mother when any real love between them has existed. Absence in another country might cause them to forget at times, but surely there would be occasions when their consciences would prick and urge them to write?

There is no reason why you should not join a reputable pen club. They have correspondents of all ages, many of whom are like you and never to meet. You could withhold your age if you wished, but else set someone guessing! But your best plan might be to find a correspondent in a like situation to yourself. You could then compare notes and exchange experiences. You should seize every opportunity to make fresh contacts, especially if you are socially minded. Join a woman's institute or some club with a small subscription fee. This would link you up with other people. At seventy, blessed with good health, you may still count upon new experiences and, hopefully, of a happier sort.

#### **MOTHER COMES FIRST—AM I RIGHT NOT TO MARRY?**

*I am a widower, aged fifty-two, and have been considering marrying again. Some time ago I met a fine woman, and there was mutual liking for one another immediately. I have been on the point of proposing, but the thought of my mother has always prevented me. She is an old woman, over eighty, and the sweetest thing in the world. I know I should have her blessing, but I feel it would break her heart if I left her now. There is always the suggestion that she could live with me if I married again, but my mother is a unique type of old woman, and if I re-arranged our lives that marvellous link of understanding which exists between us would be broken. I value her happiness so much that I shall not propose. Is my decision the correct one?*

Yes; if your greater happiness lies in remaining with your mother and you feel no overwhelming urge to change your state of life. No; if you really want to seize the chance to win a mate who is your ideal of what a woman should be. Has it occurred to you that a really loving mother, however old, would not "break her heart" if her son married a woman who gave promise of bringing

happiness to a lonely life—as yours might well be after your mother's death. On the contrary she would rejoice to see her son settled with the prospect of many happy years before him. An old woman of over eighty has lived her life, and it would be selfishness at her age to prevent a son from living his to the full, especially if her material well-being were assured, as you suggest it would be.

Possibly you do not understand your mother so well as you imagine, or you have a poor idea of her willingness to sacrifice. Why should that “marvellous link of understanding” be broken if you remarry? The only unbreakable links are spiritual, and if they ever existed, the second wife should not affect them at all. Perhaps a kindly talk with your aged mother about the situation would lead *her* to make a suggestion—and one that might conceivably surprise you!

### SHOULD A GRANDMOTHER MANAGE A YOUNG FAMILY?

*My wife died several years ago, and since then her mother, a widow, has kept house for me and the children. My mother-in-law is old but retains a remarkable aptitude for running a home, and I have no complaints on this score. But what gives me food for thought is the fact that my children are growing up with only an elderly woman's attention to them, and her example as a basis for living. An elderly person, I imagine, is hardly the best trainer for young people, mainly because her ideas of life are set in a groove; and I am concerned that my children should have the best start they can have under the regrettable circumstances of having no mother. Do you think I should endeavour to make some other arrangement for them?*

To one you would ever be likely to find would show the same loving care for your children as their grandmother. There often seems to be a special bond of sympathy between children and their grandparents; possibly the great difference in age has something to do with it. Each is ready to look at the other tolerantly and yet objectively, and children are often ready to accept advice from their grandparents that they would resent from their own father and mother.

You admit that she runs your home well, and this in itself is a constant example to your children. From this they will learn valuable habits of order and tidiness that will remain with them through life. As long as the relationship remains harmonious it would be most unwise to suggest a change. You need have no fears that they will be taught only old-fashioned things, for the children will meet all sorts of young people at school and in playing games, while their teachers will give them all the up-to-date information and ideas that they need.

On the whole then it would be unwise to remarry or to engage a young housekeeper, just for the children's sake. It is doubtful if any other person's influence or interest would be in any way as great as that of their grandmother. The children would be quick to detect this and would resent it.

### HOW SHALL I GO ABOUT MAKING MY WILL ?

*We are old people, my wife and I, and I think it time I broached to her the suggestion that we can't be here much longer. I should deplore anything that would incline her to think that life was over, but we must depart one day and I want to leave our affairs in order, with what little property we have properly apportioned. I have neglected making a will because of the thought it might put into her head. Now the time has come when this should be done, as I feel that I am losing hold on things just a little. The property we own is joint property. How shall I go about this matter generally ?*

A person owning property of any sort should make a will, no matter what his or her age may be. Although you expect to live for years yet, there is always the risk of some unforeseen accident and it is better to be prepared. If by chance you and your wife were fatally injured or suddenly fell ill and died without having had time to make a will, there would certainly be difficulties about the inheritance and distribution of your property. You should point this out to your wife, for no one wants this to happen and make her understand that it is better to make a will now than when you are both well, your affairs are in order and you have a clear idea of how you want your property distributed.

The actual drawing up of a will is not difficult. Indeed many wills drawn up hastily on a sheet of notepaper and often loosely phrased, have been held to be valid. But it is as well not to trust to such makeshifts, especially as you own property jointly and may be a little more complicated than usual. It would be better to consult a solicitor and make absolutely sure that everything is legally in order.

It is impossible to be too exact, careful and explicit in the disposition of property. Home-made wills made on ready-made will forms (obtainable for 6d. from any stationers) in nine cases out of ten will be quite satisfactory, but there is always the chance that, without a solicitor, some slip might be made that would result in a contested will, and the danger that your wishes would be set aside.

### MY HUSBAND IS BECOMING SENILE—WHAT SHOULD I DO

*I am fifty-nine; my husband is much older—seventy. He is seemingly older than that in his ways, for he has had a hard life and has never known much comfort in working. My inquiry*



*regarding his state of mind . . . and to a certain extent his physical weakness. There is no doubt that he is rapidly becoming childish, and his habits—he has little control—are far from decent. Is there anything I could do to make the situation happier for him? He seems so helpless, in a way, and I feel so fit and competent. I suppose the situation I have described is fairly general, but I feel it rather as a shock. I had never dreamed there would be such a disparity between us at this time of life.*

Twenty years ago, the difference in your ages would hardly be noticeable, and many doctors and psychologists advise that a husband should be ten years or so older than his wife. But in this case your husband seems to have become senile at an age when most men are still vigorous and full of life, while you, on the other hand, have retained your full strength.

If it can be arranged, you should consult a doctor and have your husband examined thoroughly. Describe the symptoms—both mental and physical—to the doctor and hide nothing from him, however painful, for it may all be important in a diagnosis of his condition.

The loss of self-control shows that your husband's brain centres are affected to some degree. Occasionally about the age of seventy this happens; generally accompanied by a rapid deterioration and physical break up. It is necessary to keep the patient under observation, and if his condition should get much worse, be prepared to arrange with the doctor for his removal to some home. If his condition becomes more serious, do not try to nurse your husband at home—the strain would be too great, and you would not be able to help him as much as proper medical care and attention in the local hospital. All you can do for the present, however, is to humour your husband as much as possible and see that he comes to no harm.

#### **CAN LOVE CAUGHT "ON THE REBOUND" BE GENUINE?**

*I am a widower, sixty-eight years of age, and wholly dependent upon a small business for my income. For the past six years I have shared the management of this business with a young woman, now thirty-three, who is absolutely indispensable to me. Recently, she declared that I looked neglected, and suggested coming to live in the house to look after me. Feeling that the neighbours might talk if I took her in the capacity of housekeeper, in more of a spirit of joking I proposed marriage. To my astonishment she accepted me in all seriousness. Now I am in a dilemma, for I cannot bring myself to believe she can love an old man of my age. Three months ago her engagement to a young tradesman was broken off, and I am wondering if this has influenced her in any way. What do you think?*

There is an old French saying that one either knows a woman or loves her. You have had an excellent opportunity of getting to know this young lady's character during the past six years, and if in spite of learning all her defects, you still love her, it is a great deal to her credit and the marriage would seem to have every hope of success, from your side at least.

On the other hand it is more difficult to analyse her reasons for wanting to marry you. You may have possibly caught her "on the rebound"—that is to say she still resents the treatment she received from her old lover, and is marrying you just to show him that he is not the only man in the world. If this is the case, the marriage would probably prove disastrous, for marriages like this are founded more strongly on jealousy than on love.

The great difficulty in a marriage where there is a real disparity of age is the necessary divergence of interests between husband and wife and the difficulty of understanding or sympathizing with the other's train of thought. The minds of different generations work along such different lines, and their standards of life and conduct vary so greatly, that it is often next to impossible to find any common ground.

In this case, however, you are both interested in the business, and this would make a real basis of contact. If this is the only common interest, it would probably not be enough, and you might find yourselves becoming bored with each other's company the whole time. It would be better, if you can, to reconsider the whole marriage. Propose a six months' wait, for this would give either of you time to withdraw if you felt that marriage was a mistake.

### IS MY AGED FATHER BECOMING INSANE ?

*Since the death of my husband ten years ago I have kept house for my old father, who is seventy-seven. Until about a year ago we got on very well together, although he was always inclined to be a trifle moody and to have fits of depression. But for the last few months things have been steadily getting worse. He raves sometimes at nights and then cries like a child, and there are times when he nearly drives me crazy. My three brothers allow him so much a week. This money is paid directly to me and with his old age pension, is only sufficient to barely keep us and pay the rent. For the past month, although father is lame, he has hobbled to the post-office and drawn his pension himself. He hides the money and will not give it up. He declares to my brothers and to anyone else who will listen that I am robbing him and have always starved him. These accusations hurt me terribly. Do you think his mind is going, and, if so, what ought I to do ?*

The frequent attacks of depression, and the slow deterioration of your father's mental powers, seem to point to old age senility.

At his age there is little chance of any improvement setting in, and the time may soon come when he must be removed to an institution for proper care and attention, both for your sake and his. Old people suffering from senile decay frequently have delusions of being robbed. They will accuse their relatives not only of stealing from them but of all sorts of impossible offences. They hide their money and other little things about the house like mischievous children, and, suffering from bad memories, charge others with theft when they cannot find them. Cases are sometimes reported in the papers of senile old men and women, living alone, who barricade their doors against everybody. The wailing and crying at night are also symptoms of melancholia. You may have noted that your father is inclined to eat ravenously, or, on occasions, to refuse his food. Nearly all this type of aged people complain of being persecuted, and change the name of their chief enemy from time to time.

You should consult with your brothers and your father's medical attendant. Arrange to have your father removed to the local infirmary or mental hospital as soon as you feel unable any longer to be responsible for him. As his condition gets worse he may try to commit suicide. Steps must be taken immediately to prevent any chance of this happening.

#### WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF AN EXECUTOR ?

*Although I am well over seventy years of age, I have never made a will. I have a little money saved, a little property, and one or two investments which could be realized upon my death. I have asked my nephew if he is willing to act as my executor, but he does not seem very keen upon taking this on and says he would rather I asked somebody who understood more about these things. But he is the man above all others I would appoint, and it would be a help if you could tell me, as simply as possible, what are the duties of an executor so that I could pass the information on to him.*

The executor acts as the representative of the deceased, and is liable as such, in all cases where the deceased would be liable were he alive. His first duty is to see that the funeral arrangements are properly carried out, and that the undertaker's bill is a first charge upon the estate. He should read the will to the relatives, and then proceed to make an inventory of all the goods and possessions left behind by the deceased. All outstanding bills and debts have to be collected, and the deceased's debts or liabilities settled; the creditors having prior claim being paid first. When the amount of the outstanding liabilities is not known it is usual to put an advertisement in the paper requesting that claims be sent in by a certain date.

Within six months of the deceased's death, the executor should furnish his solicitors with full details of the estate, and ask him to obtain probate or letters of administration, and also to let him know what legacy duties are liable. Finally the executor is responsible for paying out the legacies, but he is not required to do this for a year after the death. The purpose of this is to protect the executor from any further outstanding claims against the estate.

### HOW CAN I MAKE SURE MY LAST WISH WILL BE RESPECTED ?

*I am now at an age when I cannot expect to be much longer on this earth. I have no fears of death, but I do hold very strong views about the disposal of my body. Rightly or wrongly, I believe it would be much healthier and more sensible in every way if our corpses were cremated instead of buried. I have held this view for upwards of twenty years, but am sorry to say that both my wife—who is much younger than myself—and only son seem to detest the idea, and will never promise that my wish shall be carried out after my death. I do not think I shall ever be able to extract anything different from them, and as I intend that my last desire shall be obeyed I shall be glad to know what I can do to ensure this.*

Your wife and son are probably influenced by some religious motive. If so you can hardly expect them to change their opinion. Most of the opponents of cremation base their objections upon religious grounds, and, of course, have a perfect right to their beliefs. At the same time they are entirely in the wrong when they try to force their views upon others. Having failed to obtain this promise from your family you could take steps to ensure that your last wish will be respected. Get your solicitor to draw up a will in which it is explicitly stated that your executor—perhaps a friend whose views on this matter correspond with your own and who has your entire confidence—shall see that your body is duly cremated.

Some years ago, in a case similar to yours, the testator willed that a large part of the legacy to his family should be diverted elsewhere in the event of his body being buried instead of cremated. It is unlikely that you would wish to penalize your wife and son in any such drastic fashion, but you would be wise to complete your plans in every detail so that no mistake can possibly be made.

### CAN I STOP MY OLD FATHER FROM REMARRYING ?

*I am a woman of forty-eight, happily married. I can understand the loneliness, therefore, of my father, now in his seventieth year, but can hardly bring myself to believe the terrible news that he is marrying again, and to a young woman of thirty-five, the*

*daughter of his late housekeeper. If she were twenty years older I would not take violent exception to a second marriage, but I do certainly take up this attitude in the present case. I feel that it is disgusting, and I wonder is there anything I can do about it. Do you agree that such a match is nauseous? Do tell me, please, if I should attempt to prevent this marriage and, if so, how to go about it.*

One of the greatest of human temptations is the desire to deprive people of something *we* think not suitable for them, as judged by *our* standards. Before you condemn this proposed marriage, root and branch, it might be well to ask yourself one or two questions. Is it simply on account of the disparity of age that you are so antagonistic? Should your father leave you any goods he possessed, and emigrate with this young wife, would you still feel so bitter against him? Most people live by an accepted—and often doubtful—code of “morals,” and when anybody breaks one of the unwritten laws a howl goes up—but the people who cry out have seldom stopped to reason the position out clearly. It is impossible to judge the seeming right or wrong of any case unless the complete particulars are first known.

If your father is an exceptionally well-preserved man he may have another ten or fifteen years of fairly active life in front of him. Why should he be deprived of a companion if he can find one who is willing to share his lot? Many men older than your father have married wives ten or more years younger than his future wife. Almost every month the papers give some such particulars. A woman of thirty-five is at least old enough to know her own mind. Perhaps you have reason to believe there has been some intriguing in order to secure your father's possessions, and that as a result you may eventually be a loser. Unless your father is fairly well-to-do it is hardly conceivable that a young woman would contract a marriage solely with this end in view. Many women of her age marry elderly men and appear to be quite happy. You cannot stop this marriage by taking any legal action. When you see it is inevitable your wisest course is to put the best face you can upon it, and, if you cannot be friendly with the couple, at least avoid occasions for open quarrelling.

#### MY SONS FORGET OUR EXISTENCE—HOW SHOULD WE REMIND THEM ?

*We are old, my husband and I. A small income enables us to live well enough, but at this hour of our lives we are more than lonely—we are sad. There are two sons of our marriage, both married and with families of their own. They live only a few miles away, but they do not come to see us once in six months.*





*The proof of a successful and happy life is shown by the ties which bind the family together. Parents may be separated from their children by thousands of miles of land and sea, but they will never be really parted if affection is strong, for by every mail will come letters from them.*

*We should not like to embarrass them by telling how much a sight of them means to us, but we are often terribly lonely and feel we need their companionship. When the boys married I was not fair to them, for I showed I was not taken with their wives. My judgment was wrong, for the girls turned out to be splendid women. It has occurred to me they keep away for that reason, but I hope this is not the case. But the fact remains that my sons do not seem to care whether they see us or not. Is there a way in which they could be reminded that they have parents?*

It is unlikely there has ever been a fond mother in the world who has not been more or less jealous of the women who "stole" her sons from her. Mothers ought to recognize the truth while their sons are still young—that if these boys grow up to be normal men, there will come a day when another woman will take first place in their lives. Many married women are as angry and jealous at "losing" a son as they would be if their husband suddenly deserted them for another love. And what is more, in their foolishness and shortsightedness they do not scruple to make their opinions known. When you insult your boy's fiancée you insult him, and in the most tender spot. The wound may rankle for years, and if his wife is at all vindictive, she will make no attempt to heal it.

There is one course open to you. Now that you have found out your great mistake you must eat humble pie, however painful and humiliating. You should write to your sons to the effect that you are extremely sorry for anything said in the past about their wives, and tell them how much you admire them today, and are grateful for all they have done in the home. Ask them to let bygones be bygones, and to come over and see you. It is very unlikely this appeal will fail to touch them, and a reconciliation would mark the beginning of a happier era in your life.

#### SHOULD AN OLD COUPLE BUY AN ANNUITY ?

*My mother and father are both living, and although seventy-five and seventy years of age respectively enjoy excellent health. My father retired only two years ago, and being an active man and fond of getting about finds his income from the rents of two houses he owns is proving too small for his needs. I am married and hold an official post which carries only a moderate salary. My prospects are good, however, and I have no need to fear for the future. As I shall not be in a financial position to help my parents for some years I have suggested that they sell their property and buy a joint annuity. My father is averse to this idea, because he wants to be able to leave me something in his will. What do you think?*

As your parents are likely to live for some years, and are feeling cramped for want of money, the idea of a joint annuity seems an excellent one. Knowing that whatever happened they would be assured of a fixed income for life should do much to make their old age care-free and contented. Any first-class insurance company doing annuity business would furnish full particulars. The rates of the various companies differ only in details. At your parents' age, for every £100 of their capital paid for a joint annuity, they would receive just over £9 per annum—a sum between two and three times the amount an investment in a good-class Government stock would bring in. This income would be paid regularly to the surviving parent at the death of your mother or father. Your father's wish to leave you a small legacy could also be met. Some companies have an arrangement which provides that at the death of the annuitants an agreed sum is paid to their next-of-kin. The local agent would give you all details of this form of policy.

#### MY FIANCÉ'S FATHER INSULTED ME—WHAT SHOULD I DO ?

*I am thirty years old and engaged to be married to a very good man. He lives at home with his parents, aged people, but we plan to marry soon and then perhaps my worry will be less. It is about his father. The old man can be charming in company, but when I have been alone with him he has been beastly. He has made suggestions to me, much to my terrible embarrassment, and I have reproached him vehemently. But he has only grinned and remarked to the effect that I was a little fool. It is awful to feel that my good man knows nothing of this; but it seems much more awful that he should know. Please tell me what you would advise ?*

Inform your future husband without further delay. He is your natural protector. Unfortunately when a man's physical powers begin to fail, it does not necessarily mean that his desires are any the less, although he may not be able to gratify them. Indeed, with some ageing men there is a revival of sexual desire and, unless they have retained the power of self-control to some extent, serious trouble can easily follow.

Far better for you to have the situation cleared up *before* marriage, at whatever cost. If your husband finds out after you are married he may reproach you for your silence. You could ask him for your sake to restrain his anger, and to look upon his father as mentally afflicted—which he really is in a sense. Your fiancé might think it wise to have a chat in confidence with the family doctor, who would not be a stranger to these cases, and could perhaps give advice that would prevent any repetition of danger.

**IS GROUCHINESS NATURAL IN OLD PEOPLE ?**

*My father and mother are both round about the eighty mark, and I make up their small income with a weekly contribution. I am a married man with a fairly large family and to help them is quite a strain on my small wage, but, of course, I do not begrudge what little money I give to them. However, the point of my inquiry is their attitude of mind to this weekly contribution. My father takes it without a word of gratitude, and my mother never thanks me but grumbles about the hard struggle to make ends meet. This happens so often that I am beginning to wonder if they think I am mean. Do you consider this display of grouchiness is typical of people of their advanced age ?*

There are many very old people who seem incapable of expressing thanks for any help they receive. This not only applies to aged men and women in poor circumstances, but also to those who are comfortably off and without money worries of any kind. Almost any doctor can tell of elderly patients who turn on those who have nursed them lovingly for perhaps many years. They must not be blamed. There has been a gradual loss of the power of response owing to physical weakening and its effects upon the mentality.

A young child lacks the emotional ability to express its gratitude, but will more often snatch at pleasures and cry when they are not immediately forthcoming.

You should look upon your aged parents as entering on their second childhood. Then, with this understanding, you will make allowances, and, giving as liberally as you can to them, look for nothing in return. They held this attitude to you in your earliest days of need.

**MY MOTHER WILL NOT COME TO LIVE WITH ME. WHAT IS THE REASON ?**

*My old mother is now well advanced in years and is left almost alone in the world. I have asked her to come and live with us, but she will not do so, although we have plenty of room for the old lady—there are only my husband, two grown-up children and myself in the household. Actually, it was my husband who first suggested the arrangement, saying that a woman of my mother's age should not live alone, but mother is quite firm and says that we would soon be tired of sheltering her, and anyway she would hate to be "ruled." Of course this is ridiculous, for she would have her own quarters and do exactly as she pleased. Can you help me in this and tell me how I can persuade her to accept, for I am worried when I think of her living all alone with no one to look after her ?*



Probably you have made the fatal mistake of "pitying" an old woman. Nothing is more calculated to upset anybody of independent character and arouse all her obstinacy. Old people very properly resent pity of any kind—for it smacks so much of condescension and charity—and their pride may be seriously hurt. You should have shown much more tact in your approach.

The consideration you feel for your old mother does credit to both you and your husband, but, now that you have offended her, you will have to approach the situation from a very different angle. It is certainly undesirable for an old woman to live all alone with no one to look after her, and, provided that you are certain that your husband really does want the old lady to stay with you and is not just making the offer out of politeness, it would be an obvious solution to have her to live with you. It would be as well, however, to remember that the position would naturally become difficult at times, that tempers might get frayed and nerves on edge. These upsets would require all your tact to overcome peacefully, but even with these reservations it would be preferable to any other arrangement.

The best line to take now would be, first of all, to drop the subject for a time. Then reopen it again, tactfully suggesting that you personally need her presence; tell a white lie or two, saying how useful she would be in the house, and that now the children are growing up, you feel the need of her companionship, particularly during your husband's working hours. If you are tactful in this approach you should be able in time to persuade your mother to leave her home and come and stay with you.

### **MY HUSBAND AND I ARE BORED—HOW CAN WE FIND NEW INTERESTS ?**

*We are old folk and have reached a stage in our lives when little or nothing interests us. My husband's sight is failing so he reads very little nowadays, just hangs around the house depressed and moody. I am more active, but when my housework is done, find time hang very heavily on my hands. Neither of us are senile, but we seem to have lost interest in life, and no longer find any pleasure in the things that amuse the rest of the town. Unfortunately we are childless, so cannot find an interest there. Do you think we have become blasé, because once we lived a full life and saw much of the world? We travelled widely and our home was a centre for all kinds of interesting people. Now many of these are dead and the rest seem to have drifted away. Can you help us to recover our lost zest for life?*

Yes, you seem to have become blasé and bored with life as you know it. This is unfortunate, but it is typical of people who have lived



your kind of life and have relied almost entirely on other people and external stimulation to make life interesting. When the friends go all that is left is a great emptiness. In your case it is essential that you try to fill the gap and not let things drift on as at present. The cure lies mainly in yourselves. For people with your experience of life and intelligent background, it should not be difficult to work up an interest in some of the causes that once held your attention. Indeed it is surprising that you have not done so already, unless the cause itself was secondary to the people in it. In this case the best thing to do is to try and cultivate some of the young people who have many of the same interests in a new generation as you had in yours. Your experience and knowledge of life should be invaluable to them. Furthermore in mixing with the young, you will, in your turn be able to renew your own interest in life and make all kinds of fresh contacts which will revitalize you and rid you of this deadening sense of loneliness and boredom.

Possibly too, it would be as well if you could move to a new neighbourhood—that is if you can afford it. You may easily have become tired and stale in the old surroundings, and the change would certainly help you to make a fresh start. You would be revitalized to some extent by the new environment—and would be forced to make fresh contacts which would make it easier to find the young society that you need.

The main thing, however, is to stop thinking so much about yourselves and to find as many outside contacts as you can. Only in this way can you recover your old zest for life, and find a substitute in old age for the interests children might have brought you.

#### OUR NEIGHBOURS GOSSIP ABOUT US—HOW CAN WE STOP THIS ?

*My husband and I live in a small cottage, one of many in a little country town. Most of the people around us are aged too. We have not a great deal of money, but our children send us as much as they can, and with our old age pensions we manage to live moderately comfortable. Unfortunately all this is spoiled by the continual gossip of our neighbours. My husband says that they are always talking about us, and from the hush that comes over their conversation when I pass I am inclined to think this is the case.*

*For some time this gossip has been preying on my husband's mind and he threatens to tell the neighbours exactly what he thinks of them. In fact, he did tackle one man, who told him that it was "all his own stupid imagination." But I know they do talk about us, and it hurts me to think that we are constantly discussed by ill-informed people with little education. What do you suggest we can do about it ?*

Perhaps you have given the key to the whole situation when you say that your neighbours are "ill-informed people with little education." They may not be this at all—indeed it is more likely that the fault is in yourselves. Villages are always hotbeds of gossip, but it is improbable that the whole community would be in the wrong and only you right.

This is the rub and in short probably the root of the trouble lies in the fact that you have been—without meaning it—a little "upstage" and have shown your neighbours too plainly that you consider yourselves vastly their superiors in education and general intelligence. Even if this were true they would not relish being shown so, and the more you showed this feeling, the more they would resent it.

You do not mention ever having been on friendly terms with your neighbours. This is important, for if you keep yourselves to yourselves and stand conspicuously aloof from the rest of the community it is hardly surprising if they gossip about you, for human nature is insatiably curious and when it does not know it is not slow to invent.

Under the circumstances the best thing you can do is to go out and make friends with your neighbours. This may be difficult at first both for you and for them, for you will have barriers in yourselves to break at first, particularly as you have shown your contempt for them so clearly. Gradually, however, when they see your genuinely friendly motives, they will thaw and, little by little, you will be admitted to the community.

In short the best advice here is to drop your assumption of superiority, calm your suspicions of your neighbours, and make yourselves part of their society. They will soon stop their gossiping—which may, in any case, be part of your own imagination and suspicions—and you will be happier than you have been for many a year.

### **WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO WRITE TO OUR CHILDREN. WILL THEY DESERT US ?**

*We are growing old and all our children live far away with families of their own. They like to keep in touch with us, but unfortunately, with advancing age we find writing increasingly a penance, especially as our sight is failing. We try to hide our growing blindness from the children, as we fear it would worry them and make them suffer on our behalf. Recently one of our daughters wrote, saying that as she heard from us so infrequently she thought we must have forgotten her. This hurt us deeply, for we love our children immensely. All of them write to us regularly and if they stopped, life would be hardly worth living. How are we to explain to them that we cannot*

*write regularly without giving the reason? We are desperately afraid that the fewer our letters grow, the less our children will remember us, so that very soon we will be quite alone in the world.*

You are very foolish people to worry so much, and be so afraid to tell your children. They would sympathize and understand, and it would not cause them nearly as much anxiety as hanging on waiting for a letter from you—not knowing any reason for delay, and imagining all kinds of calamities that might possibly have befallen you.

It is always better to know the truth, however distressing, than to be kept in the dark, not knowing which way to turn. And, after all, failing sight is not such an uncommon disease of old age; it cannot surprise and shock them so much! Possibly, too, they might be able to help you in your trouble and send you to a specialist, who would be able to give you better spectacles or maybe, even stop the trouble altogether.

However, if your children are separated from one another, you need have no fear that they will neglect you. Blood is thicker than water, and you are the one link between them all. Through you they can hear about the other members of the family and keep family life a reality still.

Therefore, try to be frank with the children: tell them why you cannot write so frequently as at one time—they will sympathize, the family ties will be all the stronger, and you need have no fears of a lonely and neglected old age.

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